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# Complete Works

OF

## Rev. Thomas Smyth, D. D.

EDITED BY

REV. PROF. J. WM. FLINN, D. D.

NEW EDITION

WITH BRIEF NOTES AND PREFACES

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## EDITORIAL NOTE.

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The Editor's work has been confined mainly to proof reading and to occasional recensions of the printed text. The works are re-issued not for the general book-market, but for donation to public libraries.

J. WM. FLINN.





# THE NAME, NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

OF

## Ruling Elders

WHEREIN IT IS SHOWN

FROM THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE, THE  
FATHERS AND THE REFORMERS

THAT

RULING ELDERS ARE NOT PRESBYTERS OR BISHOPS

AND THAT

AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE, THEIR OFFICE OUGHT  
TO BE TEMPORARY.

WITH

### AN APPENDIX

ON THE USE OF THE TITLE BISHOP.

BY

THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "LECTURES ON THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION," "PRESBYTERY AND  
NOT PRELACY THE SCRIPTURAL AND PRIMITIVE POLITY," ETC.

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ADGER, AND WILLIAM HARRAL.

THE

## Ruling Elders,

WHOSE RECENT ELECTION TO OFFICE  
GAVE OCCASION TO ITS PREPARATION.

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THE HOPE AND EXPECTATION

OF

THE CHURCH OVER WHICH THEY PRESIDE—

MAY THEIR NAMES, THROUGHOUT ETERNITY,  
BE ASSOCIATED WITH ITS SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT;

AND BEING NOW

FOUND WISE TO WIN SOULS TO CHRIST,  
MAY THEY THEN  
SHINE AS STARS IN THE FIRMAMENT

OF

HEAVEN.



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## PREFACE.

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In the following work it will appear that while there may be *unity*, there cannot be—or at least there never has been—*uniformity* of opinion. This arises from the weakness and imperfection of our minds; the many influences which shape and modify our view of evidence; and the various “standing points” (as Neander would express it) from which we contemplate the truth. This *variety* in the midst of *unity* is found even in doctrinal sentiment, but much more in matters of ecclesiastical order. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there will be found unity in all that is essential, and “liberty” to differ in all that is not fundamental. And when we wish to know what is essential and what is not essential to salvation, and therefore to the glory of God and the edification of his people, we have perhaps the best and only guide in the words of the apostle, “The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life;” “We are ministers, therefore, not of the letter but of the spirit.” Just in proportion, therefore, as any point bears upon the spirituality of the church, and the spiritual well-being of its members, is it essential; while just so far as it is but a means towards this end, and an instrumentality for securing this result, is it unessential, and one therefore about which differences of opinion may be more freely tolerated, and differences of practice allowed. In reference to all such matters, we should act upon the apostolic canon: “Nevertheless,” (that is, notwithstanding “ye be otherwise minded”) “whereto we have attained” to unity of sentiment, “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing,” and be one in our affections towards each other.

Speaking of this subject, the late Dr. Arnold, in his Fragment on the Church, says:—“Comparing these early Christian writers with the Scriptures on the one hand, and with the later Church system on the other, as developed in the forged apostolical constitutions, we shall be able to trace three stages through which Christianity passed, and which indeed exhibit what may be called the law of decay in all institutions, whether administered by men only, or devised by them as well as administered. The first and perfect state exhibits the spirit of the institution not absolutely without all forms, for that is impossible; but regarding them as things wholly subordinate, indifferent in themselves, and therefore deriving their value from particular times and circumstances; and as such particu-

lar times are not yet come, the spirit of the institution is as yet wholly independent of them; it uses their ministry, but in no way depends upon their aid. Then comes the second stage, when from particular circumstances the existence of the spirit of the institution depends on the adherence to particular outward regulations. The men of this generation insist, as well they may, on the necessity of these forms, for without them the spirit would be lost. And because others profess to honor the spirit no less than they do, therefore they are obliged to make the forms rather than the spirit their peculiar rallying-word. Around and for these forms is the stress of battle; but their defenders well know that they are but the husk in which the seed of life is sheltered; that they are but precious for the sake of the seed which they contain, and to the future growth of which they, under the inclemencies of the actual season, are an indispensable condition.

“Then the storm passes away, and the precious seed, safely cheltered with its husk, has escaped destruction. The forms have done their appointed work, and, like the best of mortal instruments, their end should be, that after having served their own generation by the will of God, they should fall asleep and see corruption. But in the third stage men cannot understand this law. Their fathers clung to certain forms to the death; they said—and said truly—that unless these were preserved, the spirit would perish. The sons repeat their fathers’ words, although in their mouths they are become a lie. Their fathers insisted on the forms even more earnestly than on the spirit, because in their day the forms were peculiarly threatened. But now the forms are securely established, and the great enemy who strove to destroy them whilst they protected the seed of life, is now as ready to uphold them, because they may become the means of stifling it. But the sons, unheeding of this change, still insist mainly on the importance of the forms, and seeing these triumphant, they rejoice, and think that the victory is won, just at the moment when a new battle is to be fought, and the forms oppress the seed instead of protecting it. Still they uphold the form, for that is a visible object of worship, and they teach their children to do the same. Age after age the same language is repeated, whilst age after age its falsehood is becoming more flagrant; and still it is said, ‘We are treading in the steps of our fathers from the very beginning; even at the very first these forms were held to be essential.’ So when the husk cracks, and would fain fall to pieces by the natural swelling of the seed within, a foolish zeal labors to hold it together: they who would deliver the seed, are taxed with longing to destroy it; they who are smothering it, pretend that they are treading in the good old

ways, and the husk was, is, and ever will be essential. And this happens because men regard the form and not the substance; because they think that to echo the language of their forefathers is to be the faithful imitators of their spirit; because they are blind to the lessons which all nature teaches them, and would forever keep the egg-shell unbroken, and the sheath of the leaf unburst, not seeing that the wisdom of winter is the folly of spring."—pp. 119-121.

We may therefore lay it down as a sure criterion of the scripturality and purity of any church, that while it is found contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and for all the essential *principles* of ecclesiastical law, as far as they can be clearly discovered in the heavenly institutes, it is at the same time willing to receive and treat as brethren, those that "are otherwise minded" on matters pertaining to the outward form and order of the church, and the minute arrangements of ecclesiastical order.

Such assuredly has been, and ought to be the character of the Presbyterian church. Such it was under apostolic regimen; in its primitive development; in its continued existence in the Vaudois and Culdee churches; and in its period of glorious reformation. The views of Calvin and other reformers we have presented elsewhere. We cannot, however, resist a quotation from the letter of Œcolampadius, to the pastors of Soleure: "You will consider," he says, "the ceremonies to be used in the Lord's supper, which you are backward to omit and cannot omit without giving great offence. Some it seems follow the order of Zuric, some of Berne, and some that which we have adopted at Basle. We are here quite in harmony with Zuric and Berne, though we have a different ritual. When we began to reform the churches, we considered, what might be most useful to a weak people, without injury to the truth; what the feeble-minded could bear. Our object was that, though in these respects we might differ from Zuric or Strasburg, while we preserved charity towards strangers we might maintain uniformity among ourselves, who were of the same state and under the same government. For the papists and other enemies of the truth, we showed no respect. Thanks be to God, the consequence is entire harmony among the (reformed) clergy of Basle. The same is the case at Zuric and Berne; no inconvenience follows from their little variations from us. Your case is at present different; but nothing can be more advisable than that you should endeavor to agree upon a common formulary among yourselves. Some I know make light of Zuingle, and some of Œcolampadius; we however are, and always have been friends, and no one gratifies us who would sow discord in the house of God under pretence

of honoring either of us. The state of your affairs does not admit of a diversity of rites, because other sects are rising up among you: so that, though a variation of ceremonies is of little account among truly spiritual persons, yet among those in whom charity is more defective, if new and singular observances are introduced instead of those which commend themselves to the majority, this must lead to contentions. We have no wish to induce you to adopt our ceremonial, or that of Zurich, or that of Berne; but uniformity among yourselves is very important; and if this be in conformity with your neighbors it will tend the more to exclude ostentation and silence enemies. Is there any religion in a gold or wooden cup? or in the mystic bread being administered from silver or a glass dish? Has Christ any more regard for those who sit, than for those who stand or kneel? Does he obtain less who receives the sacrament from his own hand, than he who takes it from the hand of another person? O wretched beings that we are, that in calamitous times like these, when the light of the gospel hath so clearly shone upon us, we should be so in bondage to elements, and forget how our liberty is to be used to the edification of our neighbors!"\*

This spirit, in contrast with that of the Romanists and Prelatists, who like the ancient Pharisees are most severely strict in enforcing uniformity in all the lesser matters, (the tithing of mint and anise and cummin, while they overlook the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith,) has ever been the spirit of Presbyterianism. In further proof of this, we will only mention that as early as the year 1690, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland "authorized the moderator to declare in their names, that they would depose no incumbents simply for their judgment about the government of the church;"† and that on this very subject of Ruling Elders, the French Reformed church left all its particular churches to act as they thought best and most accordant to the word of God.

We do not hesitate, therefore, to say that there have been, are, and will be points of order, discipline, and law, about which differences of sentiment cannot but exist; and the attempt to coerce opinion, or to make brethren offenders for a word, or to magnify such matters into points of fundamental importance, or on their account to stir up controversy, discord and jealousy, we cannot but regard as equally unchristian and unpresbyterian.

Believing therefore these things, we have not hesitated to give our opinions freely and fully on the question of the Elder-

\*See in Scott's *Contin. of Milner*, vol. ii.

†Stewart's *Collections*, B. I. § 30.



ship. This we believe to be one of the subjects on which we may attain to *unity*, but not to *uniformity* of views; and the very admission, that while maintaining the office in some essential form, minor differences would be left to the determination of particular presbyteries or churches, would at once hush all sounds of "strife among brethren," and lead us "whereto we have attained to mind the same thing." The spirit that would enforce uniformity, is the very spirit of intolerance and spiritual despotism, and therefore is the rule laid down by Augustine, as necessary to be remembered now as in his day: "In things essential, unity; in things not essential, liberty; and in all things, charity."

For any peculiar opinions, therefore, presented in this work, not at present general in our church, we offer in conclusion, the apology given by the learned Vitringa, for similar views: "Non culpo itaque nos Presbyteros Laicos; quin agnosco eos et probo ut qui maxime. Ne peccem tamen in leges Fraternitatis cujus partem facio si rotunde enunciem, ejusmodi me Presbyteros nullos reperire in Ecclesia apostolica primi temporis, nullos etiam in Ecclesia temporum sequentium, nullos in Scriptis apostolorum aut monumentis sequentium ætatum quantum illa seu a me seu ab aliis perlustrata sunt. Hæc opinio sane mihi ita diu sedit ut in ea procedente tempore plenissime sim confirmatus et ut vitio mihi non reputem quod eam liberrime evulgem, etsi non æque consonam communi Ecclesiarum nostrarum sententiæ. Cum enim hæc quæstio inter articulos fidei nostræ levissimi sit momenti, quam proinde cuique liberum est modeste et reverenter ventilare et veritas mihi at altera parte admodum aperte blandiatur, nullus æqui et veri studiosus mihi invidet, opinor libertatem defendendi sententiam, quam nulla alia ratio aut præsumptio præter vim veritatis me coegit amplecti.\*

\*De Vet. Synag. p. 484.



# THE NAME, NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF RULING ELDERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

The nature, end, and object of the Church of Christ, its officers and ordinances, with a general review of the origin, title, and history of the office of Ruling Elder.\*

We will introduce the subject by quoting the words of the Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians 4: 8-16: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

In this passage of holy Scripture, we have a delineation of the polity and design of the church. The object of Christ's ascension was twofold. In the first place, it was the consummation and the triumph of his incarnate mystery. He had come down from heaven, and dwelt in this earth of ours: yea, and submitted, for a time, to lie in its caverns, under the power of death, that by this humiliation, abasement, and suffering in the room of sinners, he might purchase eternal redemption for

\*N. B.—This chapter formed the substance of two Discourses with Addresses to the Elders and the People, on the occasion alluded to in the Dedication.

those who had been hopelessly enslaved by sin, Satan, the world, and death. These enemies Christ had vanquished on the cross, and put them to an open shame: and now, as a triumphant conqueror, he returned to his Father, ascending beyond the regions of the air into the highest heavens—"going up," as the Psalmist elsewhere expresses it, "with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet"—leading in his train, and dragging, as it were, at his chariot wheels, those conquerors and oppressors who had enslaved his people; entering the heavenly gates with the acclamations of all the celestial hierarchy; and sitting on a throne of glory that he might fill all things with his influence, and direct and overrule all things by his wisdom and power. And as conquerors were accustomed to give largesses to their soldiers, so did the ascended Saviour pour down his royal donatives upon his faithful subjects—yea, gifts in which they even who had been long rebellious, were also to share.

Having, therefore, laid the foundation of his church, in his complete and finished work of righteousness, and endowed it with its charter in his final commission, Christ now shed down a rich variety of gifts and graces from his triumphal seat at the right hand of the Father, to qualify and endow his servants for those various offices which he has wisely and graciously instituted for the advancement of his kingdom and glory upon the earth. For this purpose, he appointed extraordinary officers, endowed with the gifts of tongues, of miracles, and of inspiration, to organize, construct, and legislate for his infant church. The office of such supernaturally qualified men was personal, and terminated with its first incumbents, whose writings and example perpetuate and extend their *influence* and *authority* to the remotest generations. But besides those who were thus extraordinary and adapted to the emergency of a new and rising commonwealth, Christ also provided for the settled and continued order and polity of his churches, by instituting the office of pastors and teachers, who are more technically called bishops or presbyters, whose duty it should be to preside in the several congregations of his people; to take the oversight of them in the Lord; and to instruct them out of his word, teaching them to observe all things whatever he had commanded, either while personally on earth or by the mouth of these inspired apostles and prophets. To these officers, and to the body of his people, Christ gave the power, and assigned the duty of carrying out the purposes of his redeeming love; gathering congregations, celebrating his ordinances, obeying all his laws, and perpetuating his church to the end of the world. And as, in accordance with the great fundamental principle of representation, which lies at the foundation of all

society, natural, social, and moral, it was found that the interests of the church would be promoted by a delegation of power to a few who should act for, and in the name of the body, and be responsible to them, we find that very early in the history of the apostolic churches, officers were appointed and representatives chosen to carry out the wishes of the brethren, and to consult, deliberate, rule and act, in their name. Of this class were the Deacons, to whom properly belongs the oversight and control of the temporal affairs of the church, and the appropriation of its funds to the relief of the poor; not, however, in independence of the other officers, but in connexion with them. For, as all the higher officers include the lower, so "the deacons' court" included the minister and elders, before whom every point requiring consultation was to be brought, the carrying out of all such financial arrangements *alone* constituting the peculiar work and duty of the Deacons.\*

\*The following is the arrangement adopted by the Free Church of Scotland:

*The duties of Elders, as laid down by the General Assembly.*

Respecting the peculiar duties of elders:—

1. That they sit in session along with the minister, and assist in the administration of discipline, and in the spiritual government of the church.
2. That they take a careful oversight of the people's morals and religious principles, of the attendance upon public ordinances, and of the state of personal and family religion.
3. That they visit the sick from time to time in their several districts.
4. That they superintend the religious instruction of the young, and assist the minister in ascertaining the qualifications of applicants for admission to sealing ordinances.
5. That they superintend and promote the formation of meetings within their districts, for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and Christian fellowship, among the members of the church.

*The duties of Deacons.*

Respecting the peculiar duties of deacons:—

1. That they give special regard to the whole secular affairs of the congregation.
2. That they attend to the gathering of the people's contributions to the general fund for the sustentation of the ministry; and that they receive the donations which may be made for other ecclesiastical purposes.
3. That they attend to the congregational poor.
4. That they watch over the education of the children of the poor.

*Elders and Deacons.*

Respecting the duties which are common to elders and deacons:—

1. That both elders and deacons may receive the Sabbath collections of the people, according to such arrangements as shall be made by the deacons' court.
2. That, for the better discharge of their peculiar duties respectively, as well as with a view to increased opportunities of doing good, both elders and deacons visit periodically the districts assigned to them, and cultivate an acquaintance with the members of the church residing therein.
3. That it is competent for elders to be employed as deacons, when a sufficient number of deacons cannot be had.
4. That deacons may assist the elders with their advice, whether in session or otherwise, when requested so to do.

*The Deacons' Court.*

Respecting the meeting of minister, elders and deacons, for secular affairs; which meeting may be called the Deacons' Court:—



Besides the deacons it would appear that other BRETHREN were chosen to represent the people in all the councils of the church, and to form with the bishop or presbyter a standing court, in connexion with each congregation charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church; for which purpose, according to our standards, they had power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the church; to call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses, where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend: to admonish,

1. That the minister preside in said meeting, when he is present; and, in his absence, any elder or deacon whom the meeting may fix upon.

2. That the said meeting, or deacons' court, is convened by citation from the pulpit, or by personal notice to the members thereof, and is called by authority of the minister, or at the requisition of any three members,—said requisition being addressed to the minister, or, in time of a vacancy of the pastoral charge, to the clerk of the said court; and the proceedings are opened and closed with prayer.

3. That this court has the management and charge of the whole property belonging to the congregation, including church, session-house, manse, school-buildings, &c., and of all its secular affairs,—including, of course, the appropriation of seats, with the determination of all questions relating thereto. And it is the province and duty of said court to transmit, from time to time, to the treasurer appointed by the General Assembly, or their committee, the funds raised for the general sustentation of the ministry; also, to apply the remaining congregational funds, in fitting proportions, to the support of the ministry, the payment of the salaries of the various subordinate functionaries, and the defraying of all necessary charges connected with the property, or with the dispensation of Christian ordinances; to apply, moreover, any surplus which may thereafter arise, to religious, ecclesiastical, educational, or benevolent objects; likewise to make special collections at the church-door, as often as may appear to them to be necessary, for the temporal relief of poor members of the congregation, and for the education of the children of the poor; and, finally, to receive the deacons' reports of their proceedings, to give them such advice and instruction as may be required, and to decide as to the payments made by them for the relief of the poor and the education of youth.

4. That while the church is solely at the disposition of the minister for all religious purposes, the consent of the deacons' court, as well as of the minister, is necessary, before any meeting, not strictly of a religious, ecclesiastical, or charitable nature, can be held in it.

5. That the said court shall have one or more treasurers and a clerk, and a separate record for the minutes of its proceedings.

6. That the record of the court, with the treasurer's account of receipt and expenditure, after said account shall have been duly audited by appointment of the court, shall be annually exhibited to the presbytery of the bounds, at the first ordinary meeting thereof after the 15th of March, for the purpose of being examined and attested by the presbytery at said meeting.

7. That on the first Monday after said attestation of the record and treasurer's account, or on some convenient day of the first or second week following the attestation by the presbytery, a congregational meeting shall be held, when the deacons' court shall present a report of its proceedings for the preceding year, give such information and explanations as may be asked for, and receive any suggestions which may be offered by the members of the congregation for the consideration of the court, with reference to the future distribution of the funds. The congregational meeting shall be convened by intimation from the pulpit, and the minister, if present, shall preside in it.

8. That to the said court shall belong the appointment and dismissal of the church-officer and door-keepers.—See note A.

to rebuke, to suspend, or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.

Dr. Hinds, who is chaplain to the archbishop of Dublin, in his *History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*, says: "When, therefore, we read that a decree was made by the apostles, presbyters, and the whole church, one of two things must be supposed to have taken place: either the presbyters took each the sense of his own congregation, or the presbyters and other *official persons*, it may be, met as the representatives, each of his own congregation, and all of the church collectively. The former supposition is certainly encumbered with more and greater difficulties than the latter. The subject proposed at these Christian meetings, seems, from the tenor of the narrative throughout, to have been first presented to the church in any shape; and the decisions took place before the meeting was dissolved. There are no marks of any previous notice of the matter to be discussed, so as to enable the several presbyters to consult the opinions and wishes of their constituents; and the decision took place without any interval to allow of an after consultation. Against the remaining supposition, namely, that the presbyters and *other official persons*, perhaps, met as the plenipotentiaries, each of his own body, the strongest obstacle lies in the phrase, 'It seemed good to the presbyters with the whole church.' Now this expression, after all, may imply no more than that it seemed good to the presbyters, and whatever other members of the council in conjunction with them, may be called the whole church, because appointed to represent it."\*

But while we believe that such officers are to be found in

\*Volume 1, page 349, and see pages 347, 348. See also similar opinions in reference to the delegated character of "*the brethren*" in this Council, by Bishop Jewell, *Def. of Apol. Part 1*, p. 41: by Whitaker *De Concil. Quæst. 3*, cap. 3; in Jameson's *Cyprianus Isotimus*, pp. 542, 543. See also Bucer *De Gubern. Eccl.* p. 84, in *ibid.* p. 555. Barnard's *Synagogue and the Church*, p. 258.

Blondel judges, that 'tis most probable, that, in the time of the Apostles, not the whole multitude, but only their seniors used to convene for choosing of their Deacons or such affairs. (*De Jure Plebis*, Francfort, 1690, p. 262, quoted in the original in Jameson's *Cypr. Isot.* p. 542.)

"I can't, indeed," says Professor Jameson, "during the first three centuries, find express mention of these seniors or ruling elders; for I freely pass from some words of Tertullian and Origen which I elsewhere overily mentioned as containing them; as also from what I said of the Ignatian Presbyters, their being Ruling or non-preaching Elders, and that without giving of much advantage to the Diocesanists, since in and about the Cyprian age, in which time, as I judge, the author or interpolator wrote, there were belonging to the same church, parish, or congregation, divers Presbyters, who preached little, if any; and yet had power to dispense the word and sacraments." (*Do.* p. 544.) See further proofs in Clarkson's *Primitive Episcopacy*, pp. 92, 100, 104, 105. Burn's *Eccl. Law on Church Wardens and Visitation*. Many eminent Presbyterian writers are of opinion that Ruling Elders are not of divine right, but as they act for and represent the people. (See *Biblical Repository*, 1832, p. 28.)

"the brethren" who sat in the council at Jerusalem, in "the helps and governments" elsewhere alluded to; and in "the church" before which offences were to be brought;\* we are strong in the belief that they were never once spoken of under the term presbyter or elder, *which always refers to the teacher or bishop solely*; and that the primitive churches were left at liberty to carry on the business of the church, either with or without such representatives, just as might be found most expedient, and most promotive of their peace, purity and harmony. For in no other way can we account for the fact that nowhere in the New Testament are these representatives enumerated as a distinct class of officers, as are the deacons and the bishops: that nowhere do we find distinct qualifications laid down for such officers, as we do for the bishop or presbyter, and for the deacons and deaconesses;† and the fact also that it is beyond controversy that down to a late period, some, at least, of the largest churches continued to carry on the business of the congregation in their general and democratic form.‡

\*Matt. 18, 15-18.

†See the Biblical Repertory, April, 1843, page 327.

‡As to the actual practice of the primitive churches, the following, out of innumerable proofs, may suffice. In the times succeeding the Apostolic, the people were always consulted in the selection of ministers. First, with respect to Bishops; Cyprian, in his letter to Antonianus, writes thus in reference to the election of Cornelius, Bishop of Rome: "For that which commends our most beloved Cornelius to God, and to Christ, and to his Church, and to all his brethren, in the Priesthood, is, that he did not come to his Bishopric suddenly, but he passed through all the different orders of the Church, and he was made Bishop by very many of our Colleges who were then at Rome, who sent to us, in reference to his ordination, the highest testimonials in his praise. He was made their Bishop by the will of God and of his Christ, by the testimony of almost all the Clergy, by the suffrages of the people who were then present." We learn from this passage that Cornelius was elected to his Bishopric by the Bishops, but that his election was confirmed by the suffrages of the people. In another Epistle he says: The ordination of Priests ought not to take place, but with the approval of the people: that by their presence either the crimes of bad men may be detected, or the merits of good men proclaimed; and let that be a just and legitimate ordination, which shall have been determined on by the suffrages and judgment of all. Eusebius gives similar testimony; speaking of the election of Fabian, Bishop of Rome, he says, "That all the people who had assembled at the election cried out that he was worthy." In a letter from a Council held at Nice, to the Church at Alexandria, it is enjoined, "That no one be chosen into the room of any Bishop deceased, unless he appear worthy, and the people elect him; the bishop of the city of Alexandria giving his approval and confirming the judgment of the people."

With respect to the appointment of Presbyters, &c., though the consent of the people was not absolutely necessary, yet no Bishop of good repute would appoint one, contrary to the expressed wish of the people. "In ordaining Clergymen, beloved brethren, we are accustomed first to consult you, and to consider with you the merits and deserts of each." See quoted in Vitringa De Vet. Synag. lib. ii. cap. vi. of Bernard's Synag. pp. 170-172. See the most ample proofs on this subject in "Coleman's Primitive Church" recently printed in this country. See chapter IV. on the elections by the Church, in which he shows that suffrage was enjoyed by the primitive churches, and when this was withdrawn, p. 54, &c. In chapter V. he shows how far discipline was exercised by the people. The epistles of all the apostolical fathers are addressed to the churches at large, and imply that the members or their delegates had the power of judging in all cases.



Experience, however, proved, as it still proves in Congregational churches, the inexpediency and danger of such a course, its impotency and inefficiency on the one hand, and on the other hand its tendency to produce parties, schisms and disturbances, and even tumults and open ruptures in the church.\* We find, therefore, in after times, a general, if not universal adoption of the principle of representation, and the government of the churches through officers chosen from time to time by the members of the church, and variously called seniors of the people, sidesmen or assistants, wardens, eldersmen, and elders, ancients and rectors, the name betokening not the age of these officers, but their character, gravity, and established reputation, as wise and pious men. In the progress of that great apostacy, which for ultimate purposes of good has been permitted to come upon the church, prelates were introduced in conformity with the high priests of the hierarchy of pagan Rome;† the simple order of bishops or presbyters was multiplied into the numerous and paganized orders now found in the Greek and Roman churches; the name and rights of God's "clergy," that is, his chosen people, (see 1 Peter 2: 9,) and of his true ministers, were monopolized by these prelatical despots, who constituted themselves into a hierarchy, and excluded *the laity* and the *inferior clergy*, as the Lord's freemen and ambassadors were ignominiously called, from all right, title, and authority, whatsoever, in that heavenly commonwealth of which Christ had constituted them citizens, yea even priests and kings unto God.‡

The Reformation, by the great grace and mercy of Him whose glorious work it was, restored to the Christian people their birth-right, and to the bishops or presbyters,—the true and only ministers of Christ,—their standing in the regenerated church; and again committed to their hands the oracles

See page 96, &c. See also evidence from Tertullian and others; page 99, 104, &c. This view is confirmed by the ablest historians, Valencis, Du Pin, Simons, Mosheim, Guerike, Neander, &c. "Thus is it proved," says Mr. Coleman, "that the church continued for two or three centuries, to regulate her own discipline by the will of the majority, expressed either by popular vote, OR BY A REPRESENTATIVE DELEGATION CHOSEN BY THEM," p. 95. The Synods also or Councils at first clearly considered themselves as *representative* bodies, delegated by the whole church. "Ipsa representatis totius nominis Christiani," says Tertullian, De Jejuniis, c. 13, p. 552. See Mosheim De Rebus Christ. Sect. II. § 23, and Coleman, p. 115. See also Note B, end.

\*See note C.

†See plain and palpable proof of this given in a work on "The Conformity between Modern and Ancient Ceremonies, wherein is proved, by incontestible authorities, that the ceremonies of the Church of Rome are entirely derived from the heathen, by Pierre Mussard, Pastor of the French or Huguenot Church at Lyons. London, 1745, chap. ii. and iii." This part of the parallel is, for very obvious reasons, omitted in the recently reprinted work by Stopford, "Pagano Papismus," which is, like Middleton's Letter from Rome, a substantial reprint of this volume.

‡See the author's work on Presbytery and Prelacy, chap. xiv. p. 295, &c.

of God, the doctrines of grace, the administration of discipline, and the general oversight of the church. And we find that just as there was then a heaven-guided unanimity in their confession of all the leading doctrines the gospel, by *all* the Reformed churches,—so was there also the same marvellous and supernatural concurrence in the belief that there is but one order of ministers in Christ's church, and that it of right belongs to Christ's people,—and not to any despotic or Erastian hierarchy—to govern and direct her affairs in conformity to the order, polity, and laws laid down in Christ's written and infallible word.\* Wherever, therefore, the civil power did not

\*That such was very strongly the opinion of the Reformed churches, will appear from the following quotation from the Smalcald Articles:—"Ubi est igitur vera Ecclesia, ibi necesse est esse jus eligendi et ordinandi Ministros; sicut in casu necessitatis absolvit etiam Laicus, et fit Minister ac Pastor, alterius: sicut narrat Augustinus historiam de duobus Christianis in navi, quorum alter baptizaverit *κατηχούμενον* et is baptizatus deinde absolverit alterum. Huc pertinent sententiæ Christi, quæ testantur, claves Ecclesiæ datas esse, non tantum certis personis. (Matt. 18: 20.) Ubique erunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, etc.

"Postremo etiam hoc confirmat sententia Petri: (1 Peter 2: 9.) Vos estis regale Sacerdotium. Quæ verba ad veram Ecclesiam pertinent, quæ cum sola habeat Sacerdotium, certe habeat jus eligendi et ordinandi Ministros. Idque etiam communissima Ecclesiæ consuetudo testatur. Nam olim populus eligebat Pastores et Episcopos. Deinde accedebat Episcopus, seu ejus Ecclesiæ, seu vicinus, qui confirmabat, electum impositione manuum, nec aliud fuit ordinatio nisi talis comprobatio." (Hase's Libri Sympolici. Lipsic, 1837, vol. 1, p. 253.)

See also many authorities given in the author's work on Presbytery and not Prelacy, ch. iii. § 3, p. 74. &c., where the subject is fully treated.

See also the Biblical Repertory for January, 1845, p. 54, etc., where it is fully shown that the grant of the keys by Christ was not to the ministry merely, but to the whole church.

"Our divines," says Mr. George Gillespie in his assertion of the government of the Church of Scotland, Part. I. ch. 4, "prove against papists that some of these, whom they call laics, ought to have a place in the assemblies of the church, by this argument among the rest; because otherwise the whole church could not be thereby represented. And it is plain enough, that the church cannot be represented, except the hearers of the word, which are the far greatest part of the church, be represented. By the ministers of the word they cannot be represented more than the burghs can be represented in parliament by the noblemen, or by the commissioners of shires; therefore by some of their own kind must they be represented, that is, by such as are hearers, and not preachers. Now some hearers cannot represent all the rest except they have a calling and commission thereto; and who can these be but ruling elders? And again, when the Council of Trent was first spoken of in the Diet at Wurtemberg, Anno 1522, all the estates of Germany desired of Pope Adrian VII. that admittance might be granted, as well to laymen as to clergymen, and that not only as witnesses and spectators but to be judges there. This they could not obtain, therefore they would not come to the council, and published a book, where they allege this for one cause of their not coming to Trent, because none had voice there but cardinals, bishops, abbots, generals, or superiors of orders, whereas laics also ought to have a decisive voice in councils. If none but the ministers of the word should sit and have a voice in a synod, then it could not be a church representative, because the most part of the church (who are the hearers and not the teachers of the word) are not represented in it. A common cause ought to be concluded by common voices. But that which is treated of in councils, is a common cause pertaining to many particular



interfere, *as it did in England*, to coerce and restrain the free action of God's disenthralled people, we find that they settled down into that form of polity which is still perpetuated in non-Episcopal churches. Besides bishops or presbyters, who came to be called ministers and pastors, in order to distinguish them from those who had prostituted the scriptural title of bishop to the designation of the *man-made* order of prelates, and who had associated this name with every thing cruel, tyrannical and unholy,\* they universally agreed that it was in accordance with Scripture, to appoint in every congregation some representatives of the people, who should be associated with the ministers in all acts of religion and government; that is, in all those acts, and only those, in which the people had an inherent right to consult, vote, deliberate and act, in conformity with the original commission and charter of the church. And as Christ had instituted an order of men for the express purpose of teaching, administering the sacraments, and ordaining those whom the church should approve, to the same high and holy ministry, and had, therefore, excluded the people from any ordinary intrusion into those offices, they also who represented the people, and were clothed with the delegated rights possessed by the people, were necessarily limited to a co-operation with the bishops of the churches in those things that pertained to *order, government and discipline*.†

Such assuredly were the views entertained by the Reformers. While they all agreed as to the expediency and propriety of such officers, there was great variety in the names by which ruling elders were called. In the Belgic confession they are termed "seniors,"‡ by which word they were distinguished in the enumeration of the fathers from the presbyters. In the ecclesiastical laws of the church of Geneva, they are called "inspectors," and "seniors," and "commissioners for the seniory" or consistory.\*‡

churches. Our divines, when they prove against papists, that the election of ministers, and the excommunication of obstinate sinners, ought to be done by the suffrages of the whole church, make use of this same argument; that which concerneth all, ought to be treated of and judged by all."

So argued one of Scotland's noblest sons, and a representative in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. And such, also, are the general views of the Presbyterian church. (See Jameson's Cyprianus Isotimus, pp. 554-556 and 540-544.)

\*See Counsellor Prynne's *Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacy, Both to Regal Monarchy and to Civil Unity, or an Hist. Collection of the Several execrable Treasons, Conspiracies, Rebellions, Seditions, Oppressions, &c., of our English, British, French and Irish Lordly Prelates, &c.* London, 2 vols. 4to. 1641.

See Form of Government, ch. i, § 2.

†Art. 31. See in Niemeyer's *Collectio Conf. in Eccl. Ref.* p. 382.

‡See this fully proved hereafter.

\*‡Quoted by Sir S. Moreland, page 60, in *Plea for Presbytery*, page 347.

"The Waldenses," says Bucer, "besides ministers of the word and sacraments, have a certain college of men, excelling in prudence and gravity of spirit, whose office it is to correct and admonish offending brethren."\*† These are called "rulers, ancients and elders." The Syrian churches, which have existed from the earliest period, called them "representatives of the people."\* The Bohemian churches called them "seniores ecclesiæ"† or "the assistants," as Comenius terms them.

In the Book of Common Order of the English church at Geneva, of which John Knox was minister, which was approved by Calvin, and received and used by the Reformed church of Scotland, and formerly prefixed to the psalms in metre, they are called "elders," the words being evidently a translation of the term "seniores," and not of the Greek term *presbyters*, and certainly not of that passage in the epistle to Timothy, from which they have now come to be generally denominated "ruling elders."‡ In the first Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, drawn up by John Knox and others in 1560, the terms "elders" and "seniors" are both employed.§ In the order for the election of elders, found in Knox's manuscript history, and published in 1569, they are called "eldaris and helparis."\*\* In the Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, agreed upon in 1578, ministers are called "pastors, Episcopi or bishops, or ministers,"††—and it is shown to be their peculiar function to teach, to administer the sacraments, to bless the people, to pronounce all sentences of binding or loosing "after lawful proceeding be the eldership,"‡‡ for it adds, "he is a messenger and herauld betwixt God and the people, (including of course in this term, people, the elders themselves, who merely represent the people in all these affairs)." This declaration of the functions of a minister must certainly include "laying on of hands," since this must be regarded as belonging to "the power of the keyes grantid unto the Kirk."§§ and of which the minister is declared to be the messenger and herald. In this work elders

\*†See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 507, and Plea for Presbytery, p. 347, &c.

\*See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 421.

†See do. p. 520, and Plea, &c., p. 356.

‡See Dunlop's Confession of Faith, vol. 2, p. 408. 1 Tim. 5: 17, is never quoted in proof.

§Do. do. pp. 577, 578, § 5, p. 580, § 8.

\*\*Do. do. page 637.

††Dunlop's Confession of Faith, vol. 2, p. 770.

‡‡An old manuscript has, "It appertains to the Minister be lawful pre-concluding with the Eldership." Do. do. pp. 771, 772.

§§Do. do.

are called "seniors or elders,"\* "sic as we commonly call elders."† "In this our division," it is added, "we call these elders whom the Apostles called presidents or governors," and the propriety of having a Church Session, or "particular eldership," this Book founds upon the fact that "this we gather of the practice of the primitive Kirk, where elders or colleges of *seniors* were constitute in cities and famous places." "It appertains to elders," according to this Book, among other things, "to assist the pastors in the examination of them that comes to Lord's table," but in no way is it implied that they should interfere with the peculiar function of the ministry, to wit, the public consummation of all such proceedings by imposition of hands, pronouncing of sentence, introduction into the church by public covenant, &c. For while it is undoubtedly true that such particular elderships‡ are empowered by this Book to "excommunicate the obstinate," and "to take heed that the word of God be purely preached within their bounds, the sacraments rightly administered, and even "deposition" to be pronounced, &c., no one will pretend that the ruling elders were to preach, administer sacraments, or pronounce sentence of excommunication. And therefore, when the provincial assembly have the power given them by this book to examine and ordain ministers, it cannot be pretended that the final and public ministerial act of "imposition of hands" is to be performed by elders, merely because it appertains to them to assist the ministers in all the preparatory examinations and decisions necessary to such final ordination.

In the Directory "Concerning Church Government," drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, and adopted by the Church of Scotland, and still in force, as "The form of Presbyterial Church Government," used by it and published with the Confession of Faith—in this work, ruling elders are never so called, now is their office ever founded on the passage where these words occur (i. e. 1 Tim: 5, 17). They are usually entitled throughout this work, "other church governors."§ These "officers," it is said, "Reformed churches *commonly* called elders."\*\* The early English Puritans held that "by God's ordinance every congregation should make choice of other officers as assistants unto the minister in the spiritual regiment of the congregation."†† Thus Cartwright in A. D.

\*Dunlop's Confession of Faith, vol. 2, p. 774. "*Sometimes*," it is said the word in Scripture is taken largely, comprehending as well the pastors and doctors.

†Do. page 776.

‡See do. do. pp. 779, 780.

§I use a copy printed in 1688. See pp. 422, 425.

\*\*Page 426, Romans 12: 7, 8, and 1 Cor. 12: 28, are given as proof texts, but not 1 Tim. 5: 17, which is *never once* quoted in all the varied references to the subject, pp. 427, 429, 431, 434, &c.

††See quoted by Dr. Ames in Plea for Presbytery, page 360.

1590 calls them "those that have charge of government only."§ And, not to enlarge, our own standards, while they adopt the common title of "ruling elders" yet fully and advisedly define and characterize these officers as being "properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office," it is added, "has been understood by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments, and of those who rule well but do not labor in word and doctrine."

In the Genevan church, in the English church there, and in all the continental churches, the office was temporary, the incumbents being elected yearly or every second year. Such also was the doctrine laid down in the first Book of Discipline, and the practice it enjoins. By the second Book of Discipline the office was made permanent, but it was arranged that a sufficient number might be appointed to allow a certain quota to officiate alternately. In the French Protestant churches, the office *was and is* temporary. In the Reformed Dutch church, Elders are elected every two years.\*\*

As to ordination, the earliest and fullest account is that given by the Confession of the Bohemian church, adopted in 1632. "They who are chosen by a plurality of votes after evening sermon is ended, are called forth by the visitor and the duties of their office are read to them. And they by word, and with the lifted hand, promise faithfulness and diligence. And that in the church also they may discharge the duty of watchmen, they are honored with a peculiar seat, that they may the more conveniently see the people."\* It thus appears from this model, which doubtless embraced the views of the Reformed churches, that no imposition of hands was employed in the ordination of Elders. That such was the case in the Church of Geneva is certain. And that no such form has ever been introduced into the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and Ireland is also certain. Neither is any such form prescribed or implied in our own standards, or used by any other branch of the Presbyterian church, so far as is known to us.

The duties of Elders in the Church of Scotland, are thus laid down in Steuart's Collections, a work which was of standard authority in this country until the adoption of our own form of government, and which constituted the basis on which that form was constructed.† "The duties of the Elders which

§Confut. of the Remist's Transl. 1618, p. 573.

\*\*Lorimer on the Eldership, p. 165.

\*See page 51 as quoted in Plea for Presbytery, p. 356.

†See Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland, vol. 1, pp. 223, 224.



are more public are those which lie upon them in the assemblies of the church in which ruling Elders have right to reason and vote in all matters coming before them, even as ministers have ; for in General Assemblies their commissions bear them to the same power with pastors. Howbeit by the practice of our church, the execution of some decrees of the church doth belong to the pastors only, such as the imposition of hands, the pronouncing of the sentences of excommunication and absolution, the receiving of penitents, the intimation of sentences and censures about ministers and such like. In short, the Elder is to speak nothing to the church from the pulpit."

It might have been thought therefore impossible, but for facts to the contrary, for any question ever to have arisen as to the right or duty of ruling elders to join in imposing hands at the ordination of ministers. For surely if there is one act peculiar to ministers as "the messengers and heralds between God and the people" it is this, and how can it with any propriety be the function of an officer who has never himself been similarly inducted into office. Certain it is that in the Directory of the Westminster Assembly, which is the standard of all the Scotch, Irish, and most of the American Presbyterian Churches, it is again and again declared as if by a frequent and intentional repetition, that "preaching presbyters orderly associated are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain for those congregations within their bounds respectively."\* And it is even required in the great emergency in which the church then stood, that "it is requisite that ministers be ordained by some who, being set apart themselves for the work of the ministry, have power to join in setting apart others."†

It is, therefore to be hoped, that a question so clearly settled by the universal practice of our own church, and of every sister church, will be put to rest, and that elders especially will not be found agitating the church by such vain and foolish questions, which gender strifes, and while they do no good, stand in the way of much that might be accomplished.

Such then are the officers which the ascended Saviour instituted in his church. Now the great end aimed at in the organization, polity, ordinances and offices of the church, was its complete organization, and therefore its efficiency. Thus speaks the apostle in the above passage, where he says that the object of all this varied ministry was to prepare believers for the perfect enjoyment of all Christian privileges, and the successful discharge of all Christian obligations to the impenitent around them and to the world at large.‡ The church

\*See Lorimer on the Eldership, pp. 438, 443.

†See page 449.

‡See the remarks on this passage in the author's work on Presbytery and Prelacy, pp. 33, 83, 85, 107, 138.

itself, and all its officers and the whole machinery of its spiritual organization, are not to be regarded, as in themselves considered, of value or importance, any more than the rites and ceremonies, the types and shadows of the ancient economy. Like them, they are means for the accomplishment of an ultimate end, and will, when that end is attained, pass away and be forgotten. These constitute but the building for the accommodation of the redeemed, while in this land of their pilgrimage; and like the rude frame-work of the tabernacle, will give place to that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. To allow, then, our devotion to terminate on the outward form, order, ministry, or ordinances of any church; or our confidence to be placed upon our connexion with them, is nothing short of *idolatry*, and can be no more acceptable to God, who is a Spirit, and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth, than the worship of the golden calves of Aaron and of Jeroboam. The apostle therefore directs our attention to the great and ultimate end for which Christ became the foundation and the chief corner stone of Zion, and for which he has instituted all its laws, polity, and ordinances. These are all designed to increase the number and perfect the hearts of them that should hereafter believe on his name, that they should no longer be left like children, helpless and exposed; or like the waves of the sea be tossed to and fro by every new doctrine and opinion; or like clouds be borne hither and thither by every gust of sophistical delusion which cunning and eloquent men may advance; but may rather be enabled by a steadfast and affectionate adherence to the truths of the gospel, and the simple ordinances of Christ, to grow up to the maturity of perfect men, and to the full measure of that spiritual maturity which is the fullness of Christ, the great centre of union, and the only source of life and joy; and may thus attain to that holiness which will fit them to become residents in his mansion in the skies, and meet partakers of an inheritance among the saints in light. Such is the true and ultimate end aimed at in the constitution of the church and its ministrations, and just so far as it is found effectual in accomplishing this glorious result is it to be regarded as fulfilling its high destiny. In this aspect the true character and importance of these offices and ordinances become apparent; and their wise and merciful adaptation to the capacities and wants of weak, erring, and mutable creatures, and to the social sympathies of our nature, clear and manifest. The church is our home, its ministers our kind instructors, its officers our guardians and friends, its members our brethren and sisters, and its ordinances and public assemblies those spiritual meals where we are gathered around the sacred and family board, and partake together of the pro-



visions of everlasting life and joy. And just as the family homestead, the instructions there given, and the sympathies there awakened, irradiate life's otherwise cheerless pathway with the continual sunshine of happiness and peace, and fit us for the proper discharge of life's duties, and a patient endurance of its trials; so do all the influences which encompass us around about in the dwelling-place of the children of God, give us in this life peace and contentment, and many an hour of rapturous exultation, and prepare us for the blessedness and the activities of a better world.

By the ministrations of the church and the faithful proclamation of the gospel, men are led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus become united to Him as their legal, vital, and ever-living head. And by a union with the church, men are also brought into the relation of spiritual unity and brotherhood with those who are members of Christ's body, and become with them branches of the same vine, sheep of the same fold, soldiers in the same host, members of the same body, children of the same household, indwellers in the same ark of deliverance, heirs to the same inheritance, and laborers in the same vineyard. Now the ministrations of the church promote this double union to Christ the common Head, and to fellow Christians; and thus enable it by the unity of its spirit, the harmony of its plans, the affectionateness of its members one for another, by its public attestation to the truth, by its holy light, influence and example, and by its active, zealous and liberal devotion to the cause of Christ, to make the Gospel sound forth into all the region round about, and to the very remotest bounds of the earth. For this purpose does Christ, the good shepherd, still continue to send forth ministers as under shepherds, that they may gently lead his flock along the green pastures, and beside the still waters; gather the lambs into his arms of mercy; and feed them with milk and food convenient for them, until they grow to maturity in knowledge and in grace. For this purpose are elders also given, that they may co-operate with the under shepherd in guarding the flock from all harm, violence and treachery; in leading forth the sheep to the pasture; in tending upon the weak, and sickly, and faint; in expelling and keeping away such as are infectious and disorderly; and in paying especial attention to the nurture and admonition of the young. For this purpose are deacons also instituted, that while the ministry and the eldership may give themselves to the spiritual interests of the people, they may relieve them, by taking charge of the business of raising all the pecuniary resources of the church, making collections for the poor and other pious purposes; distributing these funds according to the necessities of the needy and the impoverished;

and attending generally to the temporal concerns of the church. For this purpose are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper given, that by the one children and others may be initiated into the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian family; and that by the other all its members may be enriched by Christ with all spiritual blessings. For this purpose has Christ instituted discipline, that in accordance with our present weak and imperfect state, the mistakes of his officers may be corrected, difficulties obviated, unfruitful trees trimmed and digged about, the unruly and disobedient warned, the backslider restored, and the apostate or open sinner visited with that sentence which will be a precursor of his future destiny. For this purpose is every member of the church individually and relatively of importance to its interests, and their hearty co-operation necessary to the prosperity and efficiency of the body. Ministers are like the head from which proceeds that stimulus, guidance, and direction, which are essential to the vitality, the activity, the dignity, and the harmony of the system. Ruling elders are like the joints, sinews, and nerves, which conduct the vitalizing influence of the brain to the extremities; bind together every separate limb; and thus give unity, efficiency and energy, to the entire frame. And the various members of the church resemble the lungs, the heart, the digestive organs, the hands, and the feet, by whose co-operation and harmonious play, the whole man is consecrated to God, in body, soul, and spirit; a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him. It is therefore evidently upon the combined union, love, harmony and co-operation of each and all of these, that the prosperity of any church depends. Life, and even partial strength, may co-exist with the absence or weakness of any one member; but health, vigor, activity, and consequent success imply and require the existence and hearty consecration of ALL to the advancement of one common end. Deficiency in any one member begets weakness and inefficiency in all, and acts like a drain upon the energy of the body, and a drag-weight clogging and hindering its progress.

Thus have we found it in our sad experience as a church.\* We have been like the loose and separate limbs, joints, and sinews, of a dismembered frame—every one looking to his own interests, and none regarding the prosperity of the body as the subject of his own individual solicitude and responsibility. Could we, my brethren, imagine all the several stones and timbers, which, compacted together, form this building, every one to exist in isolated separation from the rest, instead of being firmly held together by that which every one

\*This picture may apply to too many churches, and is therefore retained as delivered.

supplieth, then might we have a representation of the disadvantages under which, as a church, we have hitherto labored. As your minister, I have endeavored to instruct, to warn, to correct, to improve, and thoroughly to furnish you for every good word and work; giving to every man, whether a professor of religion or otherwise, his portion in due season, without fear or favor, partiality or hypocrisy. But when the incorruptible seed of divine truth has been thus sown in your hearts, where have been the co-workers to go about the vineyard, and by their co-operating efforts, to cover that which was exposed to the birds of the air; to plant still deeper that which had only fallen upon the surface; to foster that which had taken root; and to water that which, after it had sprung up, was withering for want of the genial and fertilizing rain? How much strength has thus been spent in vain, and how much labor has thus been given for nought! How much seed of the word has been lost; how many germinating plants have been killed by untimely exposure and neglect; and how many flourishing and healthy plants have been allowed to fade and die through utter negligence. When little difficulties and misconceptions have arisen, where have been the peace-makers, eager to obtain the promised blessing of heaven, who have removed misapprehension, satisfied doubts, soothed irritated sensibility, and hushed the first breathing of anger, dissatisfaction and discord! When temporal straits or embarrassments have come suddenly upon others, and overwhelmed their minds with gloomy perturbation, where have been those friends in need who are as ready to weep with those that weep, as to rejoice with those that rejoice; and thus to nerve and cheer the heart which would otherwise shrink and tremble before the biting blast! And when any sheep of the flock has begun to wander from the fold, to neglect the green pastures of its own fertile vale, and to drink from strange fountains, where have been those watchful shepherds who have marked the first wandering footstep, and gently wooed it back to its own spiritual home? Where have been the daysmen to mediate between the pastor and his numerous flock; to hear the complaints or murmurings of both; and thus to oil the wheels which must otherwise drag heavily and with grating sound, so that the whole machinery may accomplish its designed results noiselessly and with powerful efficiency? Not that we have had no advantage from those who have labored in this field, but that through sudden and untimely death, the fewness of their number, and other causes, this influence has been, to a great extent, lost or unfelt.

But these difficulties are now, we trust, in some good measure to be obviated, by the consecration of those brethren to the work and office of the eldership whom you have with so great unanimity appointed.

#### AN ADDRESS TO RULING ELDERS;

Wherein is exhibited the relation of Ruling Elders to the people, to the Ministry, and to the Church at large.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—Allow me, in the name of this church and of my brethren in the ministry, to welcome you to the honor, the responsibility, and the labors of the office of Ruling Elder. The nature, end, and object, for which this office has been instituted in the church you have already heard. It stands in a threefold relation; first, to the people; secondly, to the pastor; and thirdly, to the church at large.

YOUR PRIMARY RELATION IS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH. Of these you are the representatives. From their number, and by their free votes, you have been called to this honorable office. To you they have delegated in a great measure, the exercise of their ultimate rights, in the government and discipline of the Church. You are, therefore, truly THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, and are responsible to them, and to Him who is their and your common Lord, for the manner in which you discharge your functions. For it is provided in our Form of Government, (chap. xiii. § vi.) that an elder may not only become incapable of performing the duties of his office, by age or infirmity, but may also become unacceptable in his official character to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs, though not chargeable with either heresy or immorality; and that, in such a case, the members of the church may request, or if necessary require, him to “cease to be an active elder.” You will, therefore, pay all due regard to your spiritual constituents, by whom, in accordance with the example of Apostolic Christians, and the practice of the primitive and reformed churches, you have been so honorably elected to office. Ever cherish the remembrance of this relation which you sustain towards them, and the correspondent obligations under which it lays you to seek their best spiritual and Christian welfare. They have given you the highest possible testimony that they have confidence in you as Christian men, and that they esteem you very highly in love. Reciprocate these feelings in your conduct towards them. Be kindly affectioned towards them. Make their acquaintance. Visit them in their houses. Cultivate kind and friendly dispositions. Let them feel that you take an interest in them; in their children; and in all their spiritual troubles. Give them your advice, when it is desired, in reference to any worldly matter which may perplex or



trouble their minds. Especially regard the young members of these families, and by your interest in their education, prospects and happiness, endeavor to secure their affection for the church of their fathers; and their hearts and lives and services for the cause of Christ, in the morning of their days. Be present, as far as practicable, at all their meetings, both on the Sabbath and in the week; and let nothing short of necessity satisfy you as an excuse for forsaking the assembling of yourselves in their meetings for prayer as well as for more public worship. Frequently visit the Sabbath School, if you can do no more, and let every meeting for the improvement of the young have peculiar claims on your attention and presence. If possible, be ready to offer prayer when necessary or desirable, by the bedside of the sick, the sorrowful, and the dying; or whenever and wherever you may be desired; and be ready also to give a reason to every man that asketh you of the hope that is in you; to counsel the ungodly; or to direct the awakened and inquiring sinner.

Remember, however, that while you are the representatives of the people, you represent not their WISHES and OPINIONS, but their DUTIES and OBLIGATIONS, THEIR RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES, as these are laid down in those heavenly laws to which you and they are both alike subject, and which no power on earth can either alter, modify, abridge, or enlarge. Cherish therefore, exalted views of your SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE AND AUTHORITY. You are officers of Christ, and in his kingdom; and within this jurisdiction no laws of man, and no whims, caprice, or passions of men, have any right to enter. Your instructions come not from man, but from Him to whom the highest among the sons of men are subject, whose will is the law of the universe, and whose word is the exposition of his will respecting the inhabitants of this lower world.\* Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be brought into bondage by no undue regard either to the *favor* or the *frowns* of men. Be ye wise as serpents; so as to avoid giving any offence either by pride, or sycophancy; by harshness or indifference; by severity or laxity of discipline. Be very scrupulous and conscientious in discovering the path of duty; and as fearless in pursuing it, whether men will praise or whether they will condemn. Seek not popularity at the expense of fidelity; nor provoke jealousy and displeasure through any vain and wanton assumption of a reckless bluntness and harshness, either of manner or of speech. And remember that to your own Master you stand or fall, and that accordingly as you commend yourselves to His approval, will you be either condemned or rewarded, whatever may be the opinion of men.

\*See the Divine Right of Church Government, page 270.



So much for your relation to the members of the church. BUT YOU STAND ALSO RELATED TO ITS BISHOP OR PASTOR. For you are "the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with the pastor." The grand, primary, and characteristic office of the bishop is authoritatively to teach whatsoever Christ has commanded. But as the highest office includes the less, and implies the authority necessary to discharge all its functions, so does the ministry include not only the function of teaching, but also the office of ruling; not only what pertains to the office of the bishop, but also what pertains to the office of the elder and the deacon; and not only what relates to the spiritual interests of the church, but also to the general superintendence of the temporal affairs, and whatever concerns the welfare of the church. But in order that the bishops of the Church might give themselves supremely to the ministry of the word and to prayer, these other offices were created in order to aid and assist them in these several spheres; the elders in all that relates to the spiritual government of the church, and the deacons in all that has regard to the temporal interests of the congregation. And hence in the Reformed churches, in the Scotch church formerly, (and in the Free church of Scotland now,) there existed in every church, not only a spiritual court called the Session, but also what is called the Deacon's Court, composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons. So that while the pastor was recognized as head of the church in all its relations, the elders represented the interests of the people in the same various aspects; while the deacons after receiving counsel from both, carried out the common views of the whole body in all that pertained to the poor, and the outward expenditures of the church.

Such, then, is another aspect, my dear brethren, of your high calling. Your office is second in dignity and importance *only* to that of the bishopric; and you are associated with the pastor in taking the entire oversight of the flock "over which the Holy Ghost has appointed you." Much of the authority and power of your office has, by an evil and disastrous custom, fallen into other hands, or is no longer exercised at all; but it is not the less—BUT THE MORE—necessary to bring forward their nature and their claims, that, with the reviving spirit of Presbyterianism, the office of ruling elder may be generally restored to its true elevation, and to the exercise of all its functions. The great object, therefore, of your office, so far as it respects the congregation over which you preside, is to constitute, with the pastor or bishop, a spiritual court for all matters of government and discipline; a common council by whom all its interests may be guarded and advanced; and a body of assistants and

co-workers by whom the labors of one minister may suffice instead of many; his labors being subdivided and his time principally given to the pulpit, to the visitation of the sick, the inquiring and the spiritually distressed; to the public business of the church; and to the defence of the truth, not only in the pulpit but through the press, which has become, next to the pulpit, the mightiest instrumentality either for good or for evil. On you, therefore, must your minister lean as his Aarons and Hurs when wearied and faint. To you must he seek for counsel in times of perplexity and doubt. In you must he find strength and influence in carrying out the discipline of the church, and enforcing the obligations of Christian discipleship. To you must he especially look for AN EXAMPLE OF CONSISTENCY AND DEVOTEDNESS BOTH AS HEARERS AND DOERS OF THE WORD, both in your personal walk and conversation; in the Christian regulation of your families; and in your willing and ready co-operation, to the utmost of your ability, in every cause of benevolence and Christian charity.

This leads me to remind you, that by the constitution of our church YOU BEAR ALSO AN IMPORTANT RELATION TO THE CHURCH AT LARGE. For as the representatives of the people you are entitled to sit as delegates in all our ecclesiastical courts, and there to deliberate, speak, and vote, on all matters that can come before the body, and also to carry into execution all their determinations, except where they imply functions peculiar to the office of the ministry, such as presiding in any court, preaching, administering sacraments, ordaining, or pronouncing sentence of suspension, and final excommunication. In this way, the popular character of the church is effectually secured; the rights and liberties of Christ's elect people maintained inviolate; the encroachments of a spiritual hierarchy and priestly despotism checked; and the free, public, and open constitution of all our ecclesiastical proceedings perpetuated. The recent history of our own church, and that also of our sister churches in Scotland and in Ireland, will prove to you how potent is the influence which an enlightened and devoted eldership can exert, in withstanding the attacks both of external and internal foes; in arousing a sleeping church to a due sense of its danger, and to a full exercise of its powers; and in thus lifting up a standard against the enemy, when he rushes in like a flood, either in the form of heresy, or error, or cold Laodicean formalism, or in Erastian conspiracy with the powers of this world to betray into their hands the crown and prerogatives of the only King and Head of the church. And, in other days too, as you retrace the footsteps of the flock, upon the bleak and barren moors, and by the deep and secluded valleys, or the midnight gathering by the light of lantern or torch

under heaven's open canopy, you will find that had not the pastors of the church been aided by bold and fearless under-shepherds, they never could have preserved through such bloody and fiendish persecutions, and against such fearful odds, that little flock whom God has preserved upon the mountains of Piedmont, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in this wide empire, and to whom he has yet purposed "to give them the kingdom."

To you then, ye elders of the church, are committed the oracles of God. You too are set, like ministers, for the defence of the truth, and purity and liberty of the gospel. And upon you, in no inconsiderable measure, hangs the destinies of the church. Estimate then as you ought, the privilege of occupying your place when delegated to it, on the high field of our ecclesiastical legislatures and general assemblies, the exalted councils of the church. Be ready to meet every such opening by any reasonable sacrifice of time and expense. Interest your hearts in all the business and proceedings of the church. Study thoroughly its doctrines, its history, its polity, and its welfare. And whenever the war-cry of danger is heard upon its borders, be ye ready to come up as standard-bearers of the cross to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

And let this cheer and encourage you, brethren, in this arduous, self-denying, but glorious labor, that He who has called you to the work will also fit, qualify and inspirit you for its discharge; be present with you in every emergency; guide and direct you in all time of perplexity; make you bold as lions, and harmless even as doves; give you a heart to love him, and a tongue to pray for and to praise him; fill you with joy and satisfaction in discharging your Master's work: and when the day of toil is over, and the night of rest is come, recompense you a hundred-fold for all your labors, welcome you as good and faithful servants into the joy of the Lord, and encircle your brow with a crown of glory that shall never fade away.

Neither will he leave you alone and unaided, to undertake all the duties involved in this labor of love. He who has overcome your reluctance, and silenced your objections, and put it into your hearts to enter into the vineyard, and, as He shall enable you, labor in its cultivation; he who stirred up the heart of Zerubbabel and others, in his day, will, if we pray to him in earnestness and importunity, lead others also to awake from their slumbers, and to come forth at the voice of their brethren, saying, "Here Lord are we, send us." With these encouragements, therefore, and in this hope and expectation, "be ye therefore, brethren, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord."



## ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH,

Showing their duty to the Ruling Elders.

And now, Christian friends, the members of the church, I turn myself, in closing, to you. You have heard the nature, ends and duties of the office of ruling elder expounded in your hearing; you have heard these brethren solemnly devote themselves to this high and holy calling, and promise and covenant, as God shall give them ability, faithfully to attempt the discharge of its high functions; and having freely elected these your brethren and thus constituted them your spiritual delegates and representatives, you have now as solemnly promised with uplifted hands, "to acknowledge and receive them as your ruling elders," and to yield them all that "honor, encouragement, and obedience," in the Lord, to which their office, according to the word of God, the constitution of our church, and the very nature of the relation itself, entitles them.

YOU ARE TO GIVE THEM HONOR. This Christianity requires. It dignifies every office, whether in the state or in the church, in the household or in society; and it requires its disciples to render to every man that honor which is his due. "Let every soul," is its voice, "be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers that be, having been instituted by God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. Render, therefore, to all their dues, and honor to whom honor is due." This rule is universal, but in reference to spiritual office, receives the sanction of solemn and superadded claims. "Obey," says God to Christians, "them that have the rule over *you*, and submit yourselves; for *THEY* watch for your souls," and your spiritual and everlasting interests, "as they that must give account," and this you are to do, "that they may give this account with joy and not with grief, for this," adds the Apostle, "would be as unprofitable for you as it would be distressing to them." It is therefore as true in religion as in the family, in every social association, and in the state, that by honoring those that are in authority we honor ourselves, and secure our own good. For as they stand as our representatives, and as the visible types and exponents of our character and laws—by honoring them we dignify those laws, give them weight and authority and power; carry them out into efficient and universal operation, and thus secure their beneficial results in the elevation of our own character, and that of our country, family, society, or church; and in the peace, harmony, integrity, and happiness, which will be thus promoted.

Give to your elders, therefore, the honor which is **THEIR DUE**. Hold their persons,—because you hold their office,—in reverence. Treat them with that deference and submission which will show your high estimate of those spiritual functions which they sustain, as office-bearers in **THE HOLIEST AND MOST EXALTED SOCIETY WHICH EXISTS AMONG MEN**. In honor prefer them above others, and esteem them very highly. Consider them through the light thrown over them by the office to which you yourselves have elevated them. Cultivate, therefore, towards them in your own minds, and in the minds of your children, the feelings of love and respect, and ever treat them with a correspondent deference and regard. Thus will you exalt their office; elevate your own conceptions of the dignity of your Christian citizenship; and ennoble the character of our common Christianity.

**BUT YOU ARE NOT ONLY TO GIVE THEM HONOR, BUT ENCOURAGEMENT ALSO.** You are well aware how reluctantly these brethren have yielded to your and my solicitations to accept of this appointment and to enter upon this office. There is not one of them,—I bear them record,—who does not shrink from the undertaking, and enter upon it with fear and trembling, and in much conscious weakness. There is not one of them who would not gladly have remained in the ranks of private citizenship. But they have yielded as much to your importunity as to the sense of duty, and they now throw themselves, (and they are well entitled to it,) upon your most kind and hearty encouragement.

And how can you encourage them? You can do this, first, and above all other ways, by constantly commending them to Him who can give them courage, who can take away their fearful and timid hearts, and give them great boldness and confidence through the strength and power of his almighty grace. You can do this by giving, in your kind and respectful treatment, in your willing co-operation, and in your readiness to overlook any deficiencies, increased confidence of success and greater zeal in aiming at higher attainments. And by your Christian humility, consistency, and growth in holiness; and your steadfast attendance upon every means of grace, you can inspire them with courage, spirit, and strength of mind. You can, in these and other ways, by your union and co-operation, your concurrence in their decisions, and your support when opposition would be made against the enforcements of the truth and order of God's house, embolden and animate their hearts, and inspirit them to go forward with untiring zeal.

And should any of you differ in opinion from the plans they may recommend, or the judgments they may decree, remember that they are set over you in the Lord, and that unless they



have acted clearly contrary to the divine law, or delivered an opinion in opposition to the mind of Christ, or adopted a course of policy derogatory to the heavenly institute; you are under obligation to submit, and not to embroil the peace and harmony of the church by contending for your private interpretations and your personal preferences. And should any of you, which may God forbid, ever become the subjects of their righteous condemnation, either on the ground of heresy, or immorality, or smearing, or Sabbath-breaking, or neglect of the worship and ordinances of the church, or failure to observe family and secret worship, or penurious and covetous refusal to give of your substance and according to your ability, to the cause of Christ, or for any other sufficient reason—I CHARGE YOU TO REMEMBER THAT IT WILL BE AT YOUR PERIL TO RESIST AND DISOBEY. For they bear not rule in vain. The sword of spiritual authority has been freely and lawfully put into their hands, and they will, and cannot but be “a terror to evil-doers.” For just so far as they carry out the laws of Christ, they are sustained by the power and authority of Christ, so that “what they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whomsoever they condemn on earth shall be condemned in heaven.” They are the ministers of Christ. They act in his name. They enforce his laws. They pronounce sentence according to his immutable decrees. And in doing so he is with them, and he will fully sustain them. And unless the condemned violator of Christ’s law shall humble his soul in penitence and sorrow, and shall turn from his evil and wicked way, Christ will frown upon him, and write bitter things against him; and if he continue obstinate and obdurate, will finally smite him with his iron sceptre, and dash him in pieces like a potter’s vessel. But rather, O thou divine Redeemer, so work in the hearts and minds of this people, that they shall ever serve thee in uprightness and sincerity all the days of their life, “until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

## CHAPTER II.

In which it is shown that in Scripture the term *Presbyter* is always applied to the Preacher, and not to the Ruling Elder; with an examination of 1 Timothy 5: 17.

It is unquestionably true, as has been already shown, that there is both principle and precedent in Scripture to warrant the election, by every church, of representatives of the people, to act with the bishop or pastor in conducting the government and discipline of the church. We found that such officers sat with the apostles and presbyters in the councils of the church as delegated commissioners, under the title of "*THE BRETHREN*," (Acts 1: 15-26, 6: 1-6, and 15,\*)—and they may also very probably be referred to in other passages.†

That such a class of officers were also recognized in the primitive church, and by many of the fathers, cannot, we think, be doubted by any impartial reader, and has been often satisfactorily proved.\*\* And that the churches very early adopted the plan of having such representatives of the people, is rendered still more certain by the existence of such officers among the Waldenses and the Syrian Christians.

Thus far we agree in opinion with the standard authorities of our church, in believing in *THE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER AND CLAIMS* of such officers in the church. But in regard to the application of the term *PRESBYTER* in Scripture and in the fathers to the ruling elder, we are obliged to dissent from the commonly received opinions. We are still persuaded that both in Scripture and in the fathers the term *PRESBYTER* is confined to the teachers or bishops of the church.

\*In none of these cases can we suppose that all the Christians were present, for Christ we know appeared to *five hundred* brethren, and at the time of the council at Jerusalem there were about 8,000 believers. These *BRETHREN*, therefore, represented *all*, and acted in their name. See Neander's Hist. of the Chr. Rel. and Ch. vol. 1, p. 205, and note, English edition.

†E. g. 1 Cor. 12: 28, Rom. 12: 8, and Matt. 18: 15-17. That the word church here means an assembly of rulers meeting together in one ecclesiastical judicatory, see largely proved in Dr. Ayton's Orig. Constit. of the Church. ch. ii. § 3, pp. 63, 64. Cartwright's Confut. of the Rhemists on Matt. 18: 15-17. In the Form of Gov't of the Waldenses, this passage is rendered, "tell to the guides whereby the church is ruled." Dr. Miller on Eldership, p. 108, Am. ed. Coleman's Primitive Church, pp. 62, 63. Brown's Dict. of the Bible, Art. Church. Livingstone's Theology, p. 251. Rutherford's Due Right of Presbyteries, &c. 4to. London, 1644, at pp. 309, 314, 322, 489-491. See also, pp. 316, 348. See also his Plea for Paul's Presbyterie, 4to. London, 1642, p. 85, &c. Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming, 4to. London, 1646, pp. 294-297, and 350-467. See further Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici. by the London ministers, 4to. London, 1654, p. 208, &c. See also many authorities produced in Paget's Def. of Pres. Ch. Gov't. London, 1641, pp. 50, 51. See also the author's Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 8, &c. Burnet on the XXXIX Art. p. 281.

\*\*See Dr. Miller's work on the Ruling Elders, and also his Letters on the Christian Ministry, and all the works on Presbyterianism.

That such is the case in Scripture, we infer from the fact that the word PRESBYTER is there used synonymously with the term BISHOP, as is now admitted by ALL writers, both prelatical and Presbyterian.† Now the characteristic function and duty of THE BISHOP, as laid down in Scripture, is, the preaching of the gospel and the instruction of the Christian people.‡ This indeed has been most strangely questioned, but in manifest contradiction to the express and pointed declaration of the Word of God. No words can be used by which the office of public teaching could be more clearly defined, than are found in those several passages, in which the terms presbyter and bishop are interchangeably employed.§ Such also was the duty imposed by the Apostle Paul upon the ministers of Ephesus, whom he in the same breath calls both bishops and presbyters.\* In exhorting the Hebrew Christians to “remember them that have the rule over them,” (i. e. their presbyters,) he explains his meaning by adding, “who have spoken unto you,” that is, preached to you, “the word of God.”†† This point is to our minds plain and palpable, for as the great duty enjoined by Christ in his commission was the preaching of the gospel; and presbyters or bishops are, as we believe, the only ministers under that commission, it follows that preaching is their chief and distinguishing function.‡‡

But if preaching, including the duties of presiding in the church, of conducting the public worship of God, of baptizing and administering the Lord’s Supper, §§—if these are the work and duty of the bishop or presbyter, and are *admitted* by all parties not to be the functions of the ruling elder, then the presumption is very strong against the *modern assumption* that the terms presbyter and bishop are applied in Scripture both to the teachers of the church and to a class of officers who did not teach. Nor is this presumption weakened by an appeal to the usages of the Jewish synagogue; for while it is true that there

†See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 108, &c.

‡See 1 Tim. 3: 1-8, Titus 1: 5-9, and 1 Peter 5: 1-5, and 1 Tim. 5: 17, and Vitringa, p. 484.

§Neander in his Preface to Coleman’s Primitive Church, p. 16, says, “And yet a distinction is also made between these pastors and teachers, inasmuch as the qualifications for the outward government of the church, *κυβερνησις*, were different from those which were requisite for the guidance of the church by the preaching of the word, *διδασκαλία*. The first belonged especially to the presbyters or bishops who stood at the head of the organization for the outward government of the church. Certain it is, at least, that they did not all possess the gift of teaching as *διδασκαλοι*, teachers.”

\*See Acts 20: 28-31.

††Hebrews 13: 7, 17.

‡‡See full on this point in the author’s work on Presbytery and Prelacy, ch. v., and also ch. iv., and in the Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry, by the London Ministers.

§§See do. do. ch. v.



were in each synagogue a senate, composed of elders or rulers as they were called, they were not ordained with imposition of hands,\*\* whereas the public teachers and preachers of the synagogue were not allowed to enter upon their work until they were ordained to that particular function,\*—they were more

\*\*Lightfoot (Works, vol. viii. pp. 459, 460) says: "The ordaining of the elders and beheading the heifer, is by the three." In this thing, therefore, this present action agreeth with the common usage of the Synagogue,—that three persons, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, lay their hands on two, that were to be sent out,—Paul and Barnabas. But in that they lay on their hands, they do, also, recede from the usual custom. "After what manner is the ordaining of elders; for ever? Not that they should lay their hands upon the head of an elder, but only should call him 'Rabbi,' and say to him, 'Behold thou are ordained, and thou hast power of judging,' &c. Laying on of hands in the ordination of elders was hardly used at all, either under the first temple, or before or under the second temple. It was not under the second temple, if we may believe the Rabbin newly quoted; or at least, if it was used, it was abolished at last. And before the second temple, where is there any sign or footstep of such a thing?"

Vitringa, it is true, is of opinion that Lightfoot had inferred more from the words of Maimonides than is becoming, (1) and he therefore thinks, both from him and other Jewish authorities which he quotes, that there were two methods of induction into office, one by imposition of hands together with the words "*ecce tu es promotus*,"—"and now behold, be thou promoted,"—and another in which the words alone, without any imposition of hands, took place. This he substantiates from the Gemara, when it is asked, "whether ordination is performed with the hand only? He replies, not so, but with the declaration also." And Tacitheus is quoted, saying, "But ordination is not performed with the hands only, but also by pronouncing the words only (*sed etiam sermone solo*)."(2) Witsius is of opinion that the ordination of the electors (*electorum*) was by imposition of hands, and that this was different from that by which the senior (*senior*) was created.(3) And with this opinion Vitringa on the whole agrees.(4) He adds, "Perhaps we may conclude this much, that while the affairs of the Hebrews flourished in Canaan, the presidents and ministers of the Synagogue who depended for their support upon the Synagogue, were confirmed in their office by imposition of hands."(5) In short, only those who are called presbyters, Rabbi or Doctor, were ordained."(6)

\*Speaking of their "preachers," Lightfoot says, (Works, vol. 5. pp. 121, 122,) "Now none of these prementioned were admitted to this public employment of teaching and preaching, but he was first ordained, and had ordination, as a state-call and commission to that office."

"And they used to ordain men to particular employment in the public administration; and they might not go beyond that particular to which they were ordained."

"They have power (saith Maimonides) to appoint whom they will to particular matters. As, for example, there was an exceeding great wise man, that was fit to teach all the law, every whit; it was in the power of the Sanhedrim to ordain him, so as that he might not judge, or that he might not teach about bound and loose; or they might give him license to teach about bound and loose, but not to judge in matters of money; or they gave him power to judge in this matter, but not to judge in matters of damage,' &c. Thus curious and circumspect they were in and about the matter of ordination, and concerning a lawful and authoritative designation of public teach-

(1) Petrus Cunæus in his *De Repub. Hebr.* cap. 12, however, takes the same view as Lightfoot, and is quoted with approbation by the London ministers in the *Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry*, Part 1, pp. 184, 185.

(2) *De Vet. Synag.* pp. 837, 838.

(3) *Miscell. Sacr. Lib. ii. Dissert. iii. § 46.* *De Heb. Synag.*

(4) *Ibid.* p. 838. (5) *Ibid.* p. 839.

(6) Bernard's *Synagogue of the Church*, pp. 85, 86, 169, 183, and Whately's *Origin of Romish Errors*, p. 107, ch. ii. § 5.

commonly called "the seniors and senators of the tribes,"\*—and the officer whose duty and privilege it was to preside in the synagogue, and either to preach himself or to appoint those who should, was denominated "bishop" or "overseer,"† and was required to be a doctor, and one who had ministered unto a doctor, before he could become eligible to the office.‡ It is

ers and judges to their peculiar and particular employment in the public, to fix them within their compass and line, and that every one might not intrude upon what ministerial or magisterial ministration he would. And, therefore, it was far from being a common use, or from being any use at all, among the Jews in their church, to let any mechanical, or uncalled and unordained men, to step up into the doctor's chair, or minister's pulpit, to read divinity publicly, or to preach in their synagogues,—as impudency or folly would put them forward on it; but they had a solemn state-call or dimission into such employments, by a lawful ordination by men themselves ordained.

"But if any man came in the spirit of a prophet, and took on him to preach under that notion, he found permittance under that notion; yet was there not immunity and liberty for any whosoever to become preacher upon that term, and so to continue, but the Sanhedrim was to judge concerning false prophets; and he that was not a prophet, and yet would be preaching as a prophet, did it at his own peril. This, then, was that that procured our Saviour liberty to preach, and audience to his preaching, in every synagogue where he came; because he came not only in the name, but also in the visible power and demonstration of a prophet, doing such wondrous signs and miracles, as that his prophetic call could not be denied, but he was glorified of all."

\*See Lightfoot's Works, vol. viii. p. 72, and vol. iii. p. 242.

†Thus Benjamin of Tudela, speaking of the city of Ispahan, says, (see Vitringa, de Synagog. Vet. lib. ii. cap. iii., and lib. i. cap. xi., and Bernard's Synagogue and the Church, pp. 146, 147, and p. 197, and especially pp. 101, 102,) "where there were fifteen thousand Jews, that excellent Doctor Sarschalon, who is the bishop, lives there." Speaking of another city, he says, "In it are fifty thousand Jews, and Rabbi Obadiah is their bishop. The same name is given to the pastors of the modern Synagogue."

"Besides these," says Lightfoot, "there was the public minister of the Synagogue, who prayed publicly, and took care about the reading of the law, and sometimes preached, if there were not some other to discharge this office. This person was called 'the Angel of the Church,' and 'The Chazan or bishop of the Congregation.' The Aruch gives the reason of the name. The Chazan (says he) is the Angel of the Church, (or the public minister,) and the Targum renders the word **דואה** by the word **תוה**, one that oversees; for it is incumbent on him to oversee, how the reader reads, and whom he may call out to read in the law." The public minister of the synagogue himself read not the law publicly; but every Sabbath he called out seven of the synagogue (on other days, fewer) whom he judged fit to read. He stood by him that read, with great care observing that he read nothing either falsely or improperly,—and calling him back and correcting him if he had failed in any thing. And hence he was called **תונן**

that is **ἐπισκοπος**, or 'Overseer.' Certainly the signification of the word 'Bishop,' or 'Angel of the Church,' had been determined with less noise, if recourse had been made to the upper fountains,—and men had not vainly disputed about the signification of words, taken I know not whence. The service and worship of the temple being abolished as being ceremonial, God transplanted the worship and public adoration of God used in the Synagogues, which was moral, into the Christian Church,—to wit, the public ministry, public prayers, reading God's word, and preaching, &c. Hence the names of the Ministers of the Gospel were the very same,—'the Angel of the Church,' and 'the Bishop,'—which belonged to the Ministers in the Synagogues."—(Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. pp. 88, 89, and Bernard's Synagogue, ch. x.)

‡See Vitringa and Bernard as above.



thus apparent, first, that the senators in the Jewish synagogue were not preachers or teachers, though like many other individuals they might be called upon to speak unto the people; secondly, that the preacher was exclusively denominated *overseer*, *angel*, and *bishop*, although as a ruler he was at the same time an elder, the greater including the less; and thirdly, that imposition of hands was confined to the overseers and bishops of the synagogue.† The presumption, therefore, which exists against that interpretation of the terms *presbyter* and *bishop* in the New Testament, which makes them applicable to the mere "*ruling elder*," or representative of the people, remains in all its force, if it is not greatly strengthened by an appeal to the government of the synagogue.

And hence Vitringa is led to exclaim, in alluding to the supposition we are controverting, in the light of his most learned and thorough investigation into the constitution of the Jewish synagogue: "And can any one then dare seriously to assert and to defend the position, that to these *lay elders* the name of *bishop* or the name of *pastor* can be appropriated? And if no one *can so dare*, then the question is settled concerning them, since no other *presbyters* are acknowledged or constituted in the church by the apostles, except those who are at the same time *PASTORS AND BISHOPS*." "It is therefore," he concludes, "certain and indubitable that the term *presbyters*, in the writings of the Apostles, means one and the same thing with *pastors and bishops*."\*

This presumption is further confirmed by the fact, that in all the passages of Scripture in which the term *presbyter* occurs, (omitting for the present the disputed passage in 1 Timothy 5: 17,) it evidently refers to the principal, and in many cases to the *only* officer at that time appointed in the infant churches.‡ which must of course refer to the preacher rather than to the mere ruler of the people. (Acts 14: 23. Phil. 1: 1. Titus 1: 5-9, &c.) The only objection of any force to this position, is that on which Dr. Miller seems mainly to rely, namely, that this view of the meaning of this term would imply the existence of a plurality of teachers in connection with one church. But this, instead of being an objection, is, on the contrary, an argument in favor of our interpretation; for that such really was the fact cannot be questioned. In the Synagogue the general rule was that there should be a plurality of the chief rulers or bishops, and the exception to this rule was the existence of only

†See do. do. lib. i. cap. ix. and Bernard's Synagogue, p. 84, and p. 58.

\*De Synag. Vet. pp. 484, 485. And if any one can judge on this point, surely Vitringa with his disposition to sustain ruling elders, (See page 484,) and his immense learning, both in Jewish and patristical lore, was the man.

‡It deserves, however, to be remarked, that there does not appear to have been any ruling elders in the church session of Antioch." Bib. Repert. 1843, p. 327. See also Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 174, &c. and Phil. 1: 1.

one.‡ That such was the case in the time of our Saviour is most certain. We have evidence that there were many rulers in the one Synagogue who of course formed a council. Thus the Evangelist Luke, speaking of St. Paul and his companions, says, "they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down; and after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them." Now these rulers, as far as we can judge from the context, were equal in rank, dignity, and office, and constituted, most probably, the presbytery of the synagogue of Antioch. In another chapter the same Evangelist mentions by name two of the rulers of the synagogue at Corinth, viz. Crispus and Sosthenes. The Evangelist Mark informs us that Jairus was *one* of the rulers of the synagogue at Capernaum. The New Testament, then, confirms our view of the government of the synagogue; and though we meet with passages in which but the one ruler is mentioned, still this does not subvert our position; the government of the synagogue being sometimes confided to one Rabbi.\*

That such was the case in the apostolic churches also, there is abundant evidence to prove. The church at Jerusalem was governed for many years by the college of presbyters constituted by the Apostles.† There was a plurality of "bishops" in the church at Philippi. (Phil. 1: 1.) There were several teachers in the church at Antioch. (Acts 13: 1, &c.) And that we may not delay, there were many bishops in the church at Ephesus. (Acts 20.)

Conformable to this was the practice of the early churches. For while in many cases, as in that of Gregory Thaumaturgus, whose congregation numbered seventeen persons, there was only one bishop, or presbyter, yet generally a plurality did in fact exist, and were very necessary, when we consider the circumstances of the church at that time, and its relations to the infidel world around it. And as to support, we know that all the officers were provided for out of a common stock; that the weekly collections for this purpose were very liberal; that many supported themselves out of their own resources; that many

‡See proofs of this given from Jewish writers in Vitringa, lib. i. cap. vi., and p. 874, and Bernard, pp. 56-58. There were always two in each Synagogue who could teach, &c.—Lightfoot, vol. v. p. 119.

\*See Vitringa, p. 874.

†Professor Jameson in his "Sum of the Episcopal Controversy," p. 87, says, "that as no kirk was subject to another, so no pastor was subject to another, but that the pastors in every particular kirk were associated into presbyteries, and did act in complete parity." "And now," he adds, "there was in Jerusalem a fully organized kirk, a kirk enjoying both bishops and deacons, the *only proper kirkmen*, so to speak, and officers of Christ's appointment;" p. 89, he adds, "there were doubtless also, at this time in the kirk diverse grave and venerable men, *chosen from among the people to represent them, and assist the pastors.*" See also Presbytery and Prelacy, pp. 28, 36, 41.

followed in part some lucrative employment; that the presbyters all lived together, with their president; and that their mode of living was at first strictly economical.

Jerome, speaking of this subject, says: "The smallness of their number makes the deacons honorable, the crowd of presbyters makes them contemptible." Eusebius informs us, that about the middle of the third century, there were in the church of Rome forty-six presbyters, and but seven deacons. And so far did the abuse proceed, that the Emperor Justinian found it necessary to limit the number of presbyters, permitting no more than sixty to be ordained for the church of Constantinople.

And however this practice was abused, as it undoubtedly was in after times, we can easily understand its wisdom and propriety in the first age of Christianity. For at that time all were enemies and none friends to the cause. Danger was therefore imminent, trials manifold, comforts few, and support scanty. By living together, several bishops could constitute a common council, a bond of union and of strength, a source of consolation, and an economical household.\* From these centres of influence they could make the word of God to sound forth into all the region round about; and from time to time, as circumstances warranted, they could plant other churches and settle other presbyters over them. And when any country had become Christianized, and the necessity for such concentration was removed, we can as easily perceive, how the members of this common council or presbytery would be separated and fixed over their respective churches, which they would govern in connexion with their respective officers. Thus naturally would arise the present form of our free presbyteries, the several members living apart but acting in common and in stated assemblies; and thus also do we see how necessity, as in the case of our missionary brethren, or persecution and danger, as in the case of the Reformers, again leads to the *concentrated* form of the original and apostolic presbytery.

These facts are essential to the proper understanding of the polity of the New Testament churches, and the manner in which prelacy could so insidiously and "by little and little," as Jerome says (*paulatim*), creep into the church.† For just as in the Synagogue one of the overseers must necessarily have presided, so in the apostolic churches one would be chosen as president and stated pastor of the local church, while the others labored as missionaries or evangelists in the surrounding country, in the same way as we still have our moderators or presidents of

\*The clergy in England continued to live together in communities to a late period. See Barnes' Eccl. Law, vol. 3, page 398. And this we know was the custom of the Culdees, both in Scotland and in Ireland.

†This point is urged with much force by Vitranga de Syn. Vet. See p. 488, 474, 864.



presbyteries which have been in some cases made permanent.† But as the establishment of this point is of great importance to our argument, we would here adduce what we have said elsewhere upon this point.

Such is the view given of the apostolic churches by Archbishop Potter, who allows that there was a college of presbyters ordained over the church of Jerusalem, who were plainly concerned in the care of the church.‡ ‘Our fourth proposition,’ says Grotius, ‘is this, that *this* episcopacy is approved by divine law, or as Bucer says, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost that one *among the presbyters* should be charged with a peculiar care.’§

In the absence of the apostles, the presbyters, as we have seen, were accustomed to preside in the church at Jerusalem.\*\* The presbyters of the church of Antioch must also have had one of their number to act as president when they were assembled together for the ordination of Barnabas and Saul.†† Such appears to have been the general practice of the churches, in all of which, according to the necessity of the case, there were a plurality of presbyters, one of their number being elected to preside in their councils; a custom which is still maintained in all its original simplicity by Presbyterians.

A plurality of bishops, presbyters, or governors, says Blondel, existed at one and the same time, in one and the same church. He further supposes that these pastors, or bishops, were all indued with equal power and honor; that the eldest minister, by virtue of his seniority, was constantly the moderator among his colleague presbyters; that this moderator was subject to the power of the presbytery, and obeyed its commands, with no less submission than did the meanest of their number; and that while he had chief power in the college, he had properly no power *over* it or independently of it.\*

That officers of this kind might be expected in the apostolic churches would appear from the fact that such chairmen, presidents, or moderators, are necessary in all assemblies, where several have a right to speak, and are therefore constantly appointed. There was, we know, such an order of presidents among the presbyters who managed, in common, the ecclesiastical affairs of the synagogue.\*† These are several times intro-

†See the author's Lectures on the Apostolic Succession, p. 42.

‡On Ch. Gov't, c. 3, p. 107, Eng. edition.

§Sacra, c. 11.

\*\*See Lord Barrington's Works, vol. ii. pp. 165, 175. Also Benson on the Relig. Worship of the Christians, c. 3, § 2, p. 83.

††Acts xiii. 1, &c. See Presbytery, &c. ch. vii.

\*Apol. Præfat. pp. 6, 7, 18, 35. See Jameson's Cyp. Isot. pp. 231, 232, vol. ii. pp. 77, 78. See also Goode's Divine Rule of Faith, ch. viii. This writer denies that any thing more can be proved from Scripture or from primitive antiquity.

\*†See this position fully sustained by Vitringa de Vet. Synagog. lib. iii, c.

duced to our notice in the sacred volume, as presiding in the Jewish synagogues, and as giving liberty to preach.‡ And it would appear to be very probable, that Peter was president, chairman, or speaker in the college of the apostles,§ and also in the church of Jerusalem, in which the twelve apostles acted conjointly, and among whom, until their dispersion, Peter *probably* acted as moderator.\*\*

Such officers, therefore, would naturally suggest themselves to the apostolic churches, especially as our Saviour had directed them to the synagogue for their exemplar.†† And when we consider the variety of gifts then enjoyed by the church, and the number who would have a consequent right to speak, and how much of the edification of the church depended on the order with which such persons spoke, judged, prophesied, prayed, sung, and exercised their gifts generally, we will understand how necessary and useful this office then was in all their meetings.\* Such an officer was no less important for the hearing and deciding of all the controversies about worldly matters which arose among the brethren; to give advice in all difficult cases;‡ to watch over the general order; to guard against abuses; to admonish the faulty; and to guide the public deliberations.‡‡ In the beginning, therefore, one of the bishops or presbyters presided, under the title of *proestos senior probatus*, &c., that is, the president or approved elder. In the second century they began to give this officer exclusively the title of bishop, calling the other bishops presbyters or elders, to distinguish them from the stated president.§§ In this way the Scriptures and the primitive fathers are harmonized, and the gradual introduction of the doctrine of prelacy is made apparent and easy, the prelate being the chief presbyter, and the other presbyters his colleagues.\*†

Allusion appears to be made to such presidents or moderators, in several passages of the New Testament. They are re-

9, p. 727, &c. Reland's Antiq. Jennings' Jewish Antiq. vol. ii. pp. 54, 55, b. ii. c. i. Also in Gillespie's Ch. of Scotland, part i. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9; and in a Confut. of I. S. Vind. of the Princ. of the Cypr. Age, p. 151. Baxter's Treatise on Episcopacy, p. 13, § 19.

‡Acts 13: 15; Luke 13: 14; Acts 18: 8 and 17.

§Whately's Kingdom of Christ, Essay ii. § 7, p. 72.

\*\*Peirce's Vind. of Presb. Ordin. part ii. p. 88, and elsewhere.

††Matt. 18.

\*Lord Barrington's Works, vol. i. pp. 85, 86. The same view is presented by Forbes, in his Irenicum, pp. 242, 243, 245. In Baxter on Episc. p. 70.

†See Macknight's Com. on 1 Tim. 5: 17, vol. iii. p. 205, where the duties of such an officer are fully described. Benson, in his Essay on the Public Worship of the Early Christians, very fully establishes the fact of such presiding officers. See Paraphrase on St. Paul's Epistles, pp. 117, 119, c. 3, § 1, § 3, and § 6.

‡‡Neander's Hist. of the First Planting of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 169, 170.

§§See Boyse's Anct. Episcopacy, Pref. p. ix. and Neander's Hist. of the First Plant. of Christianity, pp. 169, 170. Also Goode's Div. Rule of Faith, vol. ii. p. 77.

\*†Benson on Relig. Worship of Christians, c. iii. § 6. p. 95.



ferred to in that passage already considered, where the apostle says, 'the spirits of the prophets (that is, says lord Barrington, of some of the prophets) are subject to the (other) prophets.'†† 'It is most natural to think the full meaning of this place to be that the spirits of the prophets, who prophesied or exhorted, were, when duly regulated, subject to the prophets who presided.\*' Spiritual gifts, as we know, were very generally bestowed upon the members of the church of Corinth.† Their possessors, as we are also informed, were apt to put the public assemblies into confusion by their disorderly exercise; by their strife and emulation; and by all speaking together, and in unknown tongues.‡ The apostle, therefore, directs that they should speak one by one; that whilst one spake the others should sit still and judge; and that the spirits of those who were led to exercise their gifts, should be subject to those who presided.

The Thessalonians also enjoyed a large measure of these spiritual gifts,§ and stood in need of the same wise direction. We learn, too, that there was a synagogue in Thessalonica,\*\* and that some of the Jews received the gospel, and united in forming a Christian church, in connection with a great multitude of those Gentiles who had become proselytes of the gate, and worshippers of the one only and true God.\*† It is also probable, that their teachers were converts from Judaism, or, at least, proselyted Gentiles. But if so, they had been all accustomed to the ecclesiastical government of a number of presbyters, with a president who moderated their proceedings, and would naturally, therefore, adopt this plan as the policy of their church. Some of the church, however, appear to have refused to subject themselves to their teachers, and to this plan of discipline, and gave themselves up to disorder, and confusion, under the pretence of edifying others. The apostle, therefore, beseeches them to 'know,' reverence, and respect, 'those that labor among them,' as their stated ministers, 'and are over (or preside over) you,' that is, says Doddridge, those 'who preside over your assemblies, and moderate in them.‡‡ In this way, the apostle admonishes them to 'be at peace among themselves,' and 'to warn them that are unruly,' or disorderly, proudly refusing, like soldiers who will not keep their ranks or know their colors, to concur with the arrangements of their overseers. The apostle here appears to distinguish the presbyters into three classes: 1, those who labored, that is, for the extension of the church, by the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; 2, those

††1 Cor. 14: 32.

\*Lord Barrington's Works, p. 84. †See the Epistles. ‡1 Cor. c. 14.

§Acts 17: 4; 1 Thess. 5: 19-21; Barrington, p. 84.

\*\*Acts 18: 1.

\*†Acts 17.

‡‡In loco. Note.

who presided or governed in all its domestic services and worship; and 3, those who, while the others presided and governed, were employed in the instruction and admonition of the assembled Christians. He therefore in effect exhorted them, 'to take care that their presbyters be supplied with every necessary, first of all those among them who, with all their might, labored to propagate the faith of Christ in the country around, and in the next place those who governed the church, and admonished and instructed them by their voice and example.\*'

Allusion is probably made to the same office, in the epistle to the church at Rome, which was in a great measure composed of converted Jews or proselytes, who then swarmed in Rome. For in reference to the diversity of spiritual gifts, and the various modes of ministry which they occasioned, the apostle says, 'he that ruleth let him do it with diligence.'† The original word (*προϊστάμενος*) means, unquestionably, 'he who presides,' and refers to ecclesiastical office. Some of the presbyters were teachers, and others rulers, or presidents, according to their gifts. Those that were called to exercise the office of ruler or president, were required to do it with attention and zeal. The word, which thus plainly refers to ecclesiastical office, and to some office of presidency in the church, is as certainly used in 1 Thess. 5: 12, and in 1 Tim. 3: 4, 12, to designate those who held the office of teacher. And hence it would appear, that in the apostolic churches there were those who held the double office of teachers, and governor or president.‡

A similar allusion is made in 1 Cor. 12: 28, where the apostle, in an enumeration of the same diversified ministers, both extraordinary and ordinary, speaks of governments (*κυβερνήσεις*) as corresponding to those that preside or rule. This word, also, means guidance, direction, steering, as in the case of the pilot of a ship. Hence, many critics understand it here, as designating the office of a ruler or president in the church. Nor can we see any strength in the objection urged against this interpretation, founded on the low place the office is made to assume, seeing it was but the exercise of the office of teacher, already mentioned, in this particular way of occasional, or stated superintendence and direction. It is, therefore, purposely classed by the apostle among the lowest offices, and such as were mutable, that it might not be exalted into a distinct and separe order, or be supposed to imply prerogatives superior to those of the teachers in general.\*\*

\*Mosheim Comment. on the Aff. of Christ. before Constantine, vol. i. pp. 217, 218, Vidal.

†Rom. 12: 8.

‡See Stuart's Comment. in loco.

\*\*This is the main objection of Stuart, who gives one view in his text, and the opposite in an elaborate excursus. Our view of this passage is that taken by Mr. Thorndike, who says, "Those of the presbyters who preached not, are here called by the apostle *governments*, and the deacon's helps or

The same illusion would appear to be made by the apostle, in writing to the Hebrew converts throughout the world, 'Remember them who have the rule over you, (*ηγουμενους*,) and who have spoken unto you the word of God.' 'Obey them that have the rule over you, (*τοις ηγουμενους*,) and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.'†

Pamelius, commentator of Tertullian, in reference to this passage in which he says that "certain approved seniors preside," says: "Those, he says, preside who by all the Greeks are called *presbyteri*, but by us seniors; that is, not all, but those who are approved by the testimony of all."‡

We are now prepared to consider the meaning of that passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17, which is supposed to be decisive of the question as to the application to ruling elders of the title of presbyters.

"Let the presbyters who rule well (*προεστωτες πρεσβυτεροι*,) that is, who preside well, directing and managing the public worship, and the other interests of the church, "be counted worthy of double honor, (or stipend,) especially they who (besides these duties, continue zealously to) labor in word and doctrine." It here appears that there were two departments in which presbyters might render service to the church; they might be especially devoted to the business of teaching and preaching, or they might be appointed presidents (*προεστωτες*,) *standing over, taking care of, serving and moderating the councils* of the church; so that, whilst teaching and preaching, they might also in their turn, or when so required, act as presidents or moderators. It is thus that Maimonides, in his work on the Sanhedrim, describes the bishop of the synagogue, to which the apostle, and proving that the same presbyter who taught, word and doctrine," employing, as it were the very words of the apostle, and proving that the same presbyter who taught, might also preside or rule. Hence, Neander says, "that while all the ministers of the synagogue were called *elders*, those who presided were called, among other names, by this very title of *προεστωτες*. Milton also shows, that *προεστως* is nothing else than presiding presbyter.

All presbyters, it is to be observed, were thus officially entitled to rule or preside, and at first they may have done so alternately, since they are always spoken of in the plural, until the

assistants, to the government of presbyters; so that it is not to be translated helps in governments, but helps and governments," since "there were two sorts of the presbyter's office in teaching and governing, the one whereof some attained not, even in the apostles' times."—Prim. Govt. in Jameson's Cyp. p. 550.

†Heb. 13: 1, and 17.

‡See quoted in loco, and in Jameson's Culdees.



rule was adopted, that the senior presbyter should stately preside. But some presbyters were not qualified to teach well, though well adapted to preside and take charge of the local church, and if found able and faithful in the discharge of this duty, they were, says the apostle, worthy of honor.

The term *προεστως*, and the kindred words in 1 Thess. 5: 12, and Heb. 13: 7, 17, are therefore regarded by Gillespie, who was a leading member of the Westminster Assembly, as ordinary titles of the ordained pastor or minister of the church. § And it is a further confirmation of this meaning of the word, that the term priest, which has never been thought to refer to any officer but the ordained minister,\* “cometh, we know,” says Cartwright, † “not of sacerdos; but that it cometh of presbyter, for in Greek *προεστως* approacheth far nearer unto priest than *πρεσβυτερος*. In Latin the word *præses* (that may be so called of *præst*) is much nearer priest than presbyter. And as for the French and Italian, considering that they are daughters of the Latin tongue, from whence commonly they are derived, it is apparent that they are rather derived of the words before mentioned, which are natural Latin words, than of presbyter, which is Greek born, howsoever it is (by use) devised in the Latin tongue.” Presbyter and bishop were therefore both of them titles of the Christian minister, and in their distinctive meaning applied only to them; the term presbyter being adopted from the Jewish synagogue, and the term bishop from the Greek language. ‡

ALL THE PRESBYTERS HERE SPOKEN OF, WERE THEREFORE TEACHERS, AND CALLED TO MINISTER IN WORD AND DOCTRINE. The qualifications necessary for a teacher are, we have seen, every where required by this same apostle, of presbyters or bishops, (1 Tim. 3: 2, Titus 1: 9, &c.) when he sets himself explicitly and fully to define the office and duties of the presbyter; and therefore we must carry these explicit definitions of the office into the interpretation of the present passage. The term *presbyters* here, therefore, must refer to teachers, since we have in the previous history heard of no others; and the fact that all are also characterized as those that “rule,” is in

§Miscellany Questions, ch. ii. § 7, p. 22.

\*In its present acceptation, this word, as synonymous with *sacerdos*, is most dangerous and heretical, since it implies the offering of sacrifice. The word *ιερευς*, of which it is a translation, is *never* therefore, in the New Testament applied to its ministers, but only to the Jewish or Pagan priests. There is no priest under the New Testament, except Christ its head, who is a priest for ever. See on this subject Cartwright's Confut. of the Rhemists on Acts 14: 22, p. 292. See also Whatley on Romish Errors, and in many other places.

†Do. do.

‡See Presbytery and Prelacy, pp. 37, 109, 110, and Coleman's Primitive Church, p. 20.

no way inconsistent with this view, since we have proved that this function of government or jurisdiction, as well as that of teaching, belongs to all the teaching presbyters or bishops.\* The capacity to teach and to rule belongs to ALL PRESBYTERS, and is, we think, attributed to all in this passage. And the emphasis and distinction implied in the word "*especially*," must refer not to any distinction of order or office, but of appointment and labor. Those presbyters—whose function it is to teach and to rule—who at the sacrifice of all ease and comfort, and in the face of danger and death, go forth among the heathen around, and there "*labor*" and toil in preaching to such hardened and blaspheming enemies "the word and doctrine," THESE, says the apostle, are "worthy of even double honor."

The sense here given of the verb translated "*labor*" has been already noticed, and is referred to in a passage of the Apostolical Constitutions,† where it is taught that "to presbyters also, when they labor assiduously in the word and doctrines, let a double portion be assigned." It is here unquestionably made the duty of all the presbyters to preach, but it is to that kind of ministerial effort denominated *laboring*, that double honor is to be given.‡ "In no part, whatever, of the New Testament," says Mosheim,§ "is the verb *labor* made use of, either absolutely or conjoined with the words *in word and doctrine*, to express the ordinary labor of teaching, and instructing the people. But I observe that St. Paul, in various places, applies this verb, and also the noun, sometimes separately, and at other times connected with certain other words, in an especial sense, to that kind of labor which he and other holy persons encountered in propagating the light of the gospel and bringing over the Jews and heathens to a faith in Christ. In Romans 16: 12, (to pass over what is said in ver. 6 of one Mary,) the apostle describes Tryphæna and Tryphosa as laboring in the Lord; and Persis, another woman, as having labored much in the Lord, or which is the same thing, for the sake of, or in the cause of the Lord. Now what interpretation can be given to this, unless it be that these women had assiduously employed themselves in adding to the Lord's flock, and in initiating per-

\*See Presbytery and Prelacy, B. I. ch. vi.

†Lib. ii. ch. xxviii.

‡There are various allusions in this very section to the fact that presbyters were to preach, and also "to offer the eucharist."

§Commentary on the Affairs of the Christians, &c., vol. i. pp. 216, 217. See also Goode's Divine Rule of Faith, vol. ii. p. 62. Riddle's Christian Antiquities, B. iii. ch. iv. § 2, pp. 231, 232, 233. See also 231. Lightfoot's Works, vol. iii. pp. 258, 259. Voetius' Politica Eccles. tom. iii. p. 439, &c. Neander's Hist. of the Planting of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 174, 178. Also, Hist. of the Chr. Rel. vol. i. pp. 189-191, "Presbyters for ruling well, are worthy of double honor, specially for laboring in the word." See also this view of the passage urged at length by Macknight, Comm. in loco. vol. iii. pp. 206, 207. See also Neander's Hist. of the First Planting of Christianity, vol. i. p. 177.



sons of their own sex in the principles of Christianity? The word appears to me to have the same sense in 1 Cor. 4: 12, where St. Paul says of himself, "And we *labor*, working with our own hands." By laboring, I here understand him to have meant laboring in the Lord or for Christ; and the sense of the passage appears to me to be, "Although we labor for Christ, and devote our life to the spreading the light of his gospel amongst mankind, we yet derive therefrom no worldly gain, but procure whatever may be necessary to our existence by the diligence of our hands." And when in the same epistle, 1 Cor. 15: 10, he declares himself to have "*labored* more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles," his meaning unquestionably is that he made more converts to Christianity than they. It would be easy to adduce other passages in which by laboring, whether it occur absolutely or in connexion with some explanatory addition, is evidently meant not the ordinary instruction of the Christians, but the propagating of the gospel among those who were as yet ignorant of the true religion; but I conceive that the citations which I have already made will be deemed sufficient. We see, therefore, that it might not, without show of reason and authority, be contended that by "the presbyters who labor in the word and doctrine," are to be understood such of the presbyters as were intent on enlarging the church, and occupied themselves in converting the Jews and heathens from their errors and bringing them into the fold of their Divine Master—and not those whose exertions were limited to the instructing and admonishing of the members of the church, when assembled for the purpose of divine worship. And nothing could be more natural than for such to be pointed out as more especially deserving of a higher reward, and worthy to be held in greater esteem than the rest.

The practice of the churches in subsequent times further expounds this text; for having few learned and able speakers, he that could preach best preached ordinarily, and was made chief, or bishop, or president, while the rest assisted him in government and other offices, and taught the people more privately, being however regarded as of the same office and order with him, and preaching occasionally as necessity or usefulness required.\* It is true that when the prelates came to engross the power and authority of the ministry, they claimed the exclusive right to preach, while presbyters were only allowed to preach *by their permission*; and Dr. Miller deduces from this an argument in favor of the application of the term *presbyter* to lay or ruling elders; but that this was a tyrannical assumption of unconstitutional power, and neither the general rule

\*Baxter on Episcopacy, Pt. II., p. 122. Apost. Fathers, ed. Cotel. Tom. i. p. 624.

nor the general custom, cannot be doubted.\*† “Unto priests as well as unto bishops is committed the dispensation of God’s mysteries, for they are set over the church of God, and are partakers with bishops in the teaching of the people and the office of preaching,” says one ancient council. “It is a very bad custom,” says the Council of Constantinople, “in certain churches for priests to hold their peace in the presence of the bishops, as though they did either envy or scorn to hear them contrary to the apostle,” etc. Gregory thus speaks in his pastorals: “Predications officium suscipit, quis ad sacerdotium accedit,” whosoever taketh priesthood upon him, taketh upon him also the office of preaching. “Seeing to you,” says Gregory of Nyssa, “and to such as you, adorned with hoary wisdom from above, and who are presbyters indeed, and justly styled the fathers of the church, the word of God conducts us to learn the doctrines of salvation, saying, ask thy father and he will show thee; thy presbyters, and they will tell thee.” And so also, the first council of Aquisgranense, A. D. 816, most explicitly attributes to presbyters the function of preaching, and of administering the sacraments. It was in fact the general doctrine of all the fathers, that the words addressed by Christ to Peter, “feed my sheep,” were addressed to all the ministers of Christ; and thus Suicer, in entering upon his illustration of the term presbyter from the Greek fathers, defines presbyters as those to whom is committed the word of God, or the preaching of the gospel.\* Such is the clear determination of the fathers and of those who have most thoroughly studied their works. “The business of preaching,” says the learned Le Moyne, “belonged to the apostles, bishops, and the early presbyters”—and this he confirms by a long series of witnesses.† Vitringa defends the same opinion,‡ and says, “Surely nothing can be more certain, nothing in ancient history more plainly brought to light,” than that presbyters were capable of all the offices of the bishop or pastor, of which he makes an enumeration.§ Yea, verily, even as late as the time of Jerome, “What could a bishop do which a presbyter could not do, except in the matter of ordination?”\*\* in which custom and usurpation had given a precedency to the latter.

We have now then, we think, made it evident that in the primitive church, presbyters were, by their very office, preachers;†† and that there was as a general rule a plurality of them

\*†Vitringa shows that the custom of the African Church was an exception, p. 489. *De Vet. Synag.*

\*See *Presbytery and Prelacy*, p. 126.

†Not. ad Polycarpi Epist. p. 35, in Vitringa, p. 497.

‡See pp. 484, 485.

§See p. 486, and especially p. 489.

\*\*Ep. ad Evagr. l. c.

††See further proof in *Presbytery and Prelacy*, p. 157, &c. and 164, &c.

in every church, just as was the case in the apostolic churches. The presumption, therefore, arising from these facts in favor of the interpretation now given to the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17, is exceedingly strong, and this presumption will be greatly increased by the additional fact that in the fathers, the very term *προεστώτες*, here translated *ruling*, and now imagined to refer to our *ruling elders*, or lay representatives of the people, is employed to denote (as we think it does in *this* passage) the president, moderator, or superintendent of the presbytery, who was pre-eminently the pastor and preacher of the church.†† In proof of this, we request attention to the following examples:

Polycarp, in his letter to Valens, recognizes the authority of the presbyters over him, their co-presbyter, and represents him as having been “made a presbyter among *them*.”\* Clemens speaks of “the presbyters appointed over” the church at Corinth, as having the gifts, *επισκοπης*, or the episcopacy.†

Thus Justin Martyr mentions the *προεστώτες των αδελφων*, who was a presbyter, who presided, and offered up the eucharistic prayers. He calls him “that one of the brethren who presides.”‡ Irenæus, in describing the succession of bishops, calls them “presbyters, presiding among their brethren.” Such were Soter, Victor, and others, who are now glorified into popes, but who, in the days of Irenæus, were only *πρεσβυτεροι ου προισταντες*, presiding or ruling presbyters.§ Clement of Alexandria, places the honor of bishops in their having the *first seat* in the presbytery, that is, among the other presbyters, *πρωτοκαθεδρια*.\*\* Tertullian also represents the government of the church as resident in the council of presbyters, *ecclesiastici ordinis consessus*, of which the bishop was the *antistes*, *praesidens*, or *summus sacerdos*. “The presidents that bear rule, are,” says he, “certain approved presbyters.”†† Even Ignatius describes the bishop as the officer of an individual church, and as occupying the first seat, *προκαθημνονε*. The apostolical tradition ascribed to Hippolytus, represents the bishop or moderator asking the presbyter of the church over which a pastor was to be set apart, “whom they desire for a president?” *ου αιτουνται εις αρχοντα*. The setting apart of the siding bishop, or presbyter, was, by “the deacons holding the divine gospels over his head,” while presbyters were ordained by imposition of hands; nor is there any proof that the prelates, or presiding bishops, were separately ordained by imposition of hands, before the third century.\*‡

††These terms are all synonymous in their derivation.

\*Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov't, p. 227.

†Ibid.

‡Apol. ad Anton. Sect. I. c. 67.

§Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov't, p. 227.

\*\*Ibid. p. 228.

††See in Archb. Usher's Reduction of Episc.

‡†Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov't, p. 229.

\*†Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov't, p. 229.



Basil speaks of the *προεστώτες* or rulers of Christ's flock.\*§ Gregory, of Nyssa, calls bishops the spiritual *προεστώτες* or rulers.\*† Both Theodoret and Theophylact explain the term as referring to those who preach, and administer the sacraments, and preside over spiritual affairs.†† Chrysostom is of the same opinion.† Isidore, of Pelusium, in the fifth century, uses the words *προεστώς, επισκοπος, ιερεὺς*, promiscuously, for the same office.‡ Augustine testifies to the same thing; "for what is a bishop," says he, "but a primus presbyter, that is, a high priest, (who was in order only a priest,) and he (that is, the apostle) calls them no otherwise than his co-presbyters and co-priests."§ In like manner does he employ the term *sacerdos*, priest, as synonymous with *episcopus*, bishop, occasionally prefixing the epithet *summus*, or chief, and thus regarding the bishop as no more than the *primus*, presiding or ruling presbyter.\*\* Cyprian is strong in confirmation of the same position. While he employs "the office of a priesthood," and "the degree of a bishop," as synonymous,†† his great argument, upon which he frequently dwells for the superior honor of bishops, is founded upon the pre-eminence of Peter over the other apostles. But he himself teaches, and the fathers generally taught, that Peter was only *primus inter pares*, and that all the apostles were one in order, and equal in power. And, therefore, he must have believed that bishops were greater in honor than other presbyters, only because elevated to the situation of presidency.‡‡ He thought Peter was ordinarily *præses*, or moderator, in the apostolic presbytery, and that bishops stood in the same relation to their presbyters. Cyprian, in fact, was nothing more nor less than moderator of his eight presbyters, without whom he could do nothing.§§ Such was also the case with Cornelius bishop of Rome.\*† Sozomen, the ecclesiastical historian, is also found using the terms *επισκοπος, προεστώς, ηγουμενος*, and *προστατης*, as convertible terms, and thus preserving the original idea of the bishop, as the presiding presbyter.\* Hilary, under the names of Ambrose and others, calls the bishop *primus presbyter*.† Optatus calls him *primi-*

\*§In Ps. 28. In Suiceri Thes. in voce.

\*\*\*In Ibid.

\*†In Ps. 28. In Suiceri Thes. in voce, and p. 194.

††On 1 Tim. 5: 17, and Dr. Wilson's Prim. Gov't, p. 158.

‡See Dr. Wilson's Prim. Ch. p. 160.

§Tom. iv. 780, in Dr. Wilson, p. 182.

\*\*Ibid. ††Jameson's Cyp. Isot. pp. 395, 362, and c. 393.

‡‡See this position abundantly proved by Prof. Jameson, in his Cyprianus Isotimus, pp. 374, 375, 377, 380, 390, 391.

§§See Epistles, 8, 9, 20, 30, 35, 36, 48, 59, and Jameson, p. 448.

\*†In Epistle 49, *ibid.* To this agrees the testimony of Usher, in his Reduction of Episc., who thus interpreted them. That there were many officers in the same church, see Jameson, pp. 462-464.

\*See quoted in tom. iv. in Dr. Wilson, p. 191.

†In 1 Tim. Autor. Quest. in V. et N. T. in Baxter's Diocesan Ch. p. 112.



*cerius*, which, as a learned civilian defines it, means *πρωτον της ταξεως*, the first of his order,† and consequently, still a presbyter. The presbyter is thus described by Gregory Nazianzen, as the second bishop, *εν δευτεροισ θρονοις*. Just as the præter Urbanus was called *maximus*, while yet he had no more power than the others, but only a greater dignity; and as the chief archon at Athens was only one among many, *pares potestate*, so presbyters and bishops had *idem ministerium*, as Jerome attests, and *eadem ordinatio*, as Hilary declares; that is, the same ministry, orders, ordination, and power, although the bishop had the first place in official dignity.

To these testimonies may be added that of the fourth council of Carthage. "Let the bishop, when he is in the church, and sitting in the presbytery, be placed in a higher seat; but when he is in the manse, or house, let him acknowledge that he is but their colleague;"§ that is, says Chamier, "in the same charge and office."\*\*

It was doubtless in reference to this primitive custom of presidency, that the ancients speak of Peter as bishop of Antioch and Rome; James, of Jerusalem; Timothy, of Ephesus; Titus, of Crete; and Mark, of Alexandria; because they were much at those places, and frequently presided in the churches there. And hence, too, the doctrine of apostolical succession, which was nothing more than a list of those who presided over different churches.††

Prelates were originally nothing more than the *presiding presbyters* of the churches. Hence, we have found among the ancients generally, that while in Greek they were denominated *προισταμενοι*, in Latin they were called *præpositi* (hence provost);\* and while in Greek they were called *προεδροι*, that is, entitled to the first seat, in Latin they were called *proesides* and *proesidentes*, presidents;† and hence, too, in order to distinguish them from the other presbyters, who were still called bishops, they were, as Theodoret says, denominated *apostles*.\*† The original parity of the ministry, the identity of presbyters and bishops, and the derivation of prelates from this original order of presiding presbyters, or moderators, are thus found to be deeply imbedded in the whole nomenclature of the prelacy itself, in every age of the church.

From what has been said, therefore, we conclude that the

†Gothofrid in Code, in *ibid*.

§Caranz. Summ. Concil. Can. § 5. In Jameson's Cyp. p. 441.

\*\*Tom. ii. lib. xiv. c. 14, N. 12, in *ibid*. p. 442.

††Benson's Essay on the Relig. Worship of the Christians, ch. vii. § 6.

\*See authorities in Riddle's Ch. Antiq. p. 161. Coleman's *ibid*. p. 98. Bingham, vol. i. p. 53, &c.

†Riddle's Ant. p. 162. Bingham, &c.

\*†Riddle, *ibid*. p. 162.

passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17, does not refer to a double order of elders, but to the peculiar duties to which in the apostolic and primitive churches, presbyters, the same order, were assigned—the term *ruling* referring to the duty assigned to those who were set over the local church, and who presided over the meetings of the presbytery; and the word *especially* referring to the peculiarly self-denying and laborious duties to which *THEY* were called who performed the work of evangelists in the surrounding country. Or, if this interpretation seems too conjectural, there is still another which is easy and natural, and accordant to the facts in the case. It will be shown from Cyprian that the distinction so generally recognized by the reformers and in our own mother church, between pastors and doctors, was acted upon in the primitive church. Both were presbyters, but while the one discharged fully all the functions of the pastor, the other labored in preparing the catechumens for admission into the church, in giving instruction also to candidates for the ministry, and to all others also when schools were established by the apostles, as is asserted, and by the earliest Christians, as is undoubted. And of this distinction there are clear proofs remaining. The double reference, therefore, in this passage, may be to *this* double class of duties, the presidency of a congregation where other ministers were associated, being an office more of honor than of toilsome labor, and for which a man of advanced years, who was not adapted to the active duties of the latter sphere, might be competent.

Either interpretation will meet the difficulties of the case; and if the word rendered “honor” mean, as is supposed, *compensation*, it will still more effectually exclude the ruling elder, whose office has never been salaried.\*

There is, then, no warrant in Scripture, or in the constitution of the apostolic or of the early churches, for interpreting the term *presbyter* in the New Testament as having reference to the representatives of the people, that is, to our present ruling elders. It must, therefore, be regarded as appropriated to the bishops or teachers of the churches. And just as we have now presidents or moderators of our presbyteries, chosen from among the presbyters, so were there in the apostolic churches presidents, who were distinguished from the others by being called “presiding presbyters.” And as these were originally chosen for life, they gradually came, by way of abbreviation, to be called “THE BISHOPS,” to distinguish them, until, in process of time, this title was appropriated exclusively to them, while that of presbyters alone was given to the

\*See this view ably sustained by Vitringa, p. 490, &c.

others.† This text, then, and it is the only one which gives any ground for two kinds of presbyters,‡ cannot, to use the words of Dr. Wilson,\* establish such distinction, because it can be literally understood of the various duties of the same order. Presbyters advanced in life, grave in deportment, and of distinguished prudence, were fitted to preside; others, if of more ready utterance, and of competent knowledge, were best qualified to teach. The passage shows that some *presided*, that others *labored* in word, and that the honor, or rather *reward* was to be proportioned to their efforts, and not according to grades and orders never mentioned in the Scriptures. Presbyter, as an officer of a church, means, in every other passage in the New Testament, a bishop, in the ancient sense of the term; and there is no reason to infer from this text, a new sort, never heard of till the Reformation. If there is any priority, it is a precedence over the presbyters themselves; for the *προεστως* was he who *presided* amongst the Ephori, among whom was parity; or who governed a kingdom, and, accordingly, Chrysostom thought him both *ποιμην* and *διδασκαλος*, a *pastor and teacher*. So far is the word *ruling* (*προεστωτη*) from signifying a subordinate class of presbyters, that Justin Martyr, within half a century of John, makes use of that identical word repeatedly, to mark out that presbyter, who gave thanks and dispensed the elements at the sacramental supper to the deacons, to be carried to the communicants. The presbyters, who presided (*προεστωτες*) on the most solemn occasions, blessing the elements, deserved double reward; but

†On the importance of this view in explaining the origin of Prelacy, and other difficulties, see Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 162, &c., and p. 295, &c.

‡Should any allege in proof of the passage in 1 Tim. 4: 14, we would reply in the words of Mr. Lazarus Seaman, in his Vindication of the Ordination of the Reformers, p. 92, "Though the power of ordaining or confirming pastors (say they) belong to the whole presbytery, yet of old the presbytery did execute that in the rite of laying on of hands, not so much by ruling elders as by pastors, who did especially attend on prophecy or explication of the scripture, and application of it to the use of the faithful. Unde Prophetia cum Manuum impositione per quam olim fiebat Ordinatione Pastorum ab Apostolo conjunctur. 1 Tim. 4: 14. By this it appears they have a singular opinion of the word prophecy, not of the word presbytery; for they plainly supposed the presbytery consisted of two sorts of elders, and yet that preaching elders only laid on hands. And well they might suppose that, (as doth your author so often cited, p. 171,) because much of prayer and teaching is to accompany the act of imposition, before and after. None affirm that the word presbytery, as it is used in 1 Tim. 4: 14, does necessarily imply a company of ruling elders, as well as others. But upon the supposition that there are two sorts of elders, proved by other places, they may be included under that one word, because it is comprehensive of them both."

\*On the Government of the Churches, pp. 283, 284. We might quote at great length in further confirmation, Vitranga de Syn. Vet. See pp. 479-484, 490, 879, 883.

*especially those* (μαλιστα οι) who performed the chief labor in preaching. "All the saints salute you, (μαλιστα δε οι,) but chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household." (Phil. 4: 22.) Who would imagine that the saints of Cæsar's household were of a different kind from others? Their labors might be different, but they were equally saints; the word *especially* only *expresses* that their salutations were either *more* earnest, or presented to *peculiar* notice.\*

\*See also Coleman's Primitive Church, p. 127.



### CHAPTER III.

The term *Presbyter* was applied by the Fathers only to Ministers who preached and ordained, and not to Ruling Elders.

We now come to the Fathers, and inquire whether among them the office of ruling elders existed, and if so whether they denominated such officers by the term *presbyters*? On the first inquiry it is not our purpose to dwell, as it has been already sufficiently established by many writers, and is clearly implied in all the proofs by which the participation of the laity in the government of the church is so undeniably proved.\* The only question, therefore, to which we advert, is, in what way the representatives of the laity who sat in all the early councils, and took part in all the concerns of the church, were described, and whether they are ever to be understood by the term *presbyter*.

In the writings of THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS we seem to have the simple delineations of church polity which are given in the New Testament, except in the epistles of Ignatius, which there is very little reason to doubt, have been made to assume the coloring of a subsequent age.† We read in Clemens Romanus of no other officers in the church than “bishops and deacons,” for while he does employ the term *presbyters*, he identifies the persons so named with those whom he calls bishops, since he supposes the presbyters to have been invested with the episcopal office, and blames the church of Corinth for having cast them out of their bishoprics, that is, out of their episcopal office.‡ Either, therefore, there were no officers corresponding to ruling elders in the church at Corinth in the time of Clemens, the people conducting their affairs as a body, or otherwise the bishops and other presbyters, together with the deacons, were intrusted with the oversight of the congregation. Clemens, it is true, speaks of a plurality of these presbyter-bishops in the Corinthian church, but this, we have seen, is in exact accordance with apostolic usage.

Very similar is the letter of Polycarp, who was probably the *προεστως*, or presiding presbyter “in the church at Smyrna,” for Irenæus calls him “the apostolic presbyter,” and also “bishop.” This epistle begins very similarly to the epistle to the Philippians, (ch. 1: 1,) or to the address of the apostle Peter to his fellow presbyters, (1 Peter 5: 1, &c.) “Polycarp and his fellow presbyters,” or “the presbyters united with him,”

\*See note B.

†See this proved in Presbytery and Prelacy.

‡See Ep. § 44, 47, and 57. See the author's work on Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 340, &c.

and living with him at Smyrna, "to the church of God at Philippi." Now that by presbyters he meant *ministers*, is plain from its application to Valens their former minister and bishop, who was, he says, "made a presbyter;" and from the fact that as the apostle spoke only of bishops and deacons in their church, (Phil. 1: 1,) so Polycarp alludes only to presbyters and deacons. He must, therefore, mean by presbyters the bishops of the apostle. And he does, as we have seen, actually employ these terms as interchangeable and synonymous.\*

It will appear from a comparison of the passages in the writings of Hermas, which bear on this subject, that he considered *bishops* and *elders* as different titles for the same office. He speaks of *elders* as *presiding over the church of Rome*; he represents a *plurality of elders* as having this *presidency* at the same time; having used the word *bishops*, he explains it as meaning those *who presided over the churches*; and immediately after *bishops*, (without mentioning *presbyters*,) he proceeds to speak of *deacons*, that is, those who are intrusted with *the protection of the poor and of the widows*.

As to one other passage, in which he uses four terms in describing the officers of the church, it must either be interpreted in accordance with the preceding one, the terms bishop, doctor, and minister, as in Scripture, being applicable to the one general order of Christian ministers, whom Hermas had denominated presbyters, and who are here made to succeed the apostles; or, if it must be taken literally, then it recommends four orders of the ministry, and not three, and these, too, such as no man on earth can find or distinguish. It is apparent, that to all these officers, Hermas attributes the management of the episcopal office, and the power of the keys, and therefore they must all possess the same powers and functions. He makes no distinction whatever between the rulers and the teachers, but identifies their office. And hence we must conclude, that in the time of Hermas, presbyters were equally called apostles, that is, their successors in the ordinary ministry of the word, bishops, doctors, and ministers, and that no other officers were known to the churches, except deacons, who attended to the wants of the poor. These presbyters, or bishops, it is further evident, constituted a college who governed in common the church of some single city or parish,—the presbyters in this city who govern the church."†

In Ignatius we have a very frequent reference to the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, but there is nothing whatever to militate against the view of these terms already given. We must, therefore, conclude, that he uses these words in their scriptural

\*See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 347.

†See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 346.

sense, and as they were employed by Clemens, Polycarp, and Hermas; and that he meant therefore by bishop, the president, or *προεστως*, of which bishop is a literal rendering, and fully expresses its meaning. To give to the term bishop any other meaning, as prelatists do, is most intolerable presumption, and a plain contradiction to the inspired testimony. That the presbyters of Ignatius were preachers, and not merely rulers or representatives, is, we think, evident from the manner in which they are spoken of. He calls on the people to submit "to the presbytery as to the law of Christ," and "to the presbyters as presiding in the place of the apostolical senate." He calls them "those who preside among you as the type or example, and the source of instruction in incorruptible truth."† "Be subject to the presbyters as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope."\* In the epistle to Hiero, ascribed to Ignatius, he says of presbyters, "they baptize, they celebrate the eucharist, they impose hands in penance, they ordain."§

Of THE PRIMITIVE FATHERS, the first of whom we have any record is Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia, A. D. 116. Of his exposition of the oracles of God only a few fragments remain. And of these the only passage bearing on the question before us, is perhaps the one preserved by Eusebius, which is as follows: "I shall not think it grievous to set down in writing, with my interpretations, the things which I have learned of the presbyters, and remember as yet very well, being fully certified of their truth. If I met any where with one who had conversed with the presbyters, I inquired after the sayings of the presbyters; what Andrew, what Peter, what Philip, what Thomas or James had said; what John, or Matthew, or any other disciples of the Lord were wont to say; and what Ariston, or John the presbyter said: for I am of the mind that I could not profit so much by reading books, as by attending to those who spake with the living voice." It is very evident from this extract, that, in the estimation of this primitive father, the presbyterate was the highest order in the ministry, and the true succession of the apostles, in their ordinary ministry, since he speaks only of presbyters, and expressly calls the apostles themselves presbyters.‡

Justin Martyr denominates the pastor or officiating minister of the Christian church, the *προεστως*, president or moderator. This word he uses, instead of *minister* or *bishop*, six times, and these other terms not at all.

According to Justin Martyr, therefore, the bishop, who was

†Epist. ed Magnes, § 6.

\*Ep. ad Fall. § 2, and § 3, and Ep. ad Smyrn. § 8. See his testimony fully considered in Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 349, &c.

§Cap. iii. ed. Cotel Thorndike, pp. 163, 164.

‡See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 366, &c.



the pastor of a single congregation, and therefore, by no possibility a prelate, was also a presbyter. As such he offered up prayers, and gave thanks, in the church; administered the Lord's Supper; delivered discourses; and generally conducted the worship of the congregation, in all which duties we have described to us the office of a pastor, but not that of a prelate, or of a ruling elder. Justin employs the very term, so commonly applied to presbyters throughout the New Testament, calling his bishop the *προεστως*, the presbyter who presided, the moderator, or *primus inter pares*.\*

About this very period, Philo, in describing the order of the synagogue, says: "They brought him (i. e. the accused) before the president, with whom the priests sat in council;"† and this term, president, is, says Vitringa, commonly appropriated by the Rabbis to the bishop or preacher of the congregation.‡

That Irenæus also employs the term presbyter, as the title of those who preached and administered sacraments, is plain. In the letter addressed by the martyrs to Eleutherius, they commend to him Irenæus, "as a presbyter of the church, which degree he had obtained."

"We ought,"§ says Irenæus himself, "to obey those *presbyters* who are in the church; those, I mean, *who have succession from the apostles*, as we have shown, who with the succession of THE EPISCOPATE, have received, according to the good pleasure of the Father, the sure gift of truth. But they who are looked upon by many as *presbyters*, but serve their own pleasures, . . . and are elated with pride, at *their exaltation to the chief seat*, . . . shall be reproved by the Word. . . . From all such it behoves us to stand aloof, and to cleave to those who, *as I have said before*, both retain the doctrine of the apostles, and, with THE ORDER OF THEIR PRESBYTERS, (or as Fevardentius reads, *of a presbyter*,) exhibit soundness in word, and a blameless conversation." Having described wicked presbyters, he adds,\*\* "from such we ought to depart, but to adhere to those who keep the doctrine of the apostles; and with the order of presbytery, maintain sound doctrine, and a blameless conversation, &c. Such presbyters the church does not nourish, concerning whom the prophet also saith, I will give thee princes in peace, and bishops in righteousness. Of whom our Lord also said, Who, therefore, is that faithful, and good, and wise servant, whom his master may set over his house, to give them their food in due season?" Again, "He, that is, the apostle, attributes to all teachers, that succession of the church that is from the apostles; and then relates what

\*See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 367.

†See Life of Moses, lib. lii. p. 528, in Vitringa.

‡See Vitringa, lib. i. ch. vi. and Bernard, pp. 55, 56.

§Adv. Hæres, l. iv. c. 43.

\*\*Ibid. l. iv. c. 44.



doctrine he had received from a certain presbyter, that had received it from such as saw and conversed with the apostles." Writing to Florinus, he says, "These opinions, O Florinus, the presbyters before our times, the disciples (or first successors) of the apostles, did by no means deliver to thee"\* After alluding to Polycarp, and to his instructions and discourses, he adds, "I can testify before God, that if that holy and apostolic presbyter (Polycarp) had heard only such a thing, he would instantly have reclaimed and stopt his ears." Writing to Victor, then bishop of Rome, on the subject of the Easter controversy, he reminds him, that "he ought to follow the ancient custom of the presbyters, whom he had succeeded," alluding to Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus, whom he had just named, and whom he calls presbyters.†

Victor, bishop of Rome, A. D. 192, thus writes: "As thy holy fraternity were taught by those presbyters, who had seen the apostles in the flesh, and governed the church, until thy time, (we find) the catholic church celebrate pasch, not on the fourteenth of the month, with the Jews, but from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first. Therefore let thy fraternity write to the presbyters of Gaul, that they observe pasch, not as the Jews, who deny Christ, but with the followers of the apostles, and preachers of the truth. The college of the brethren salute thee: salute the brethren who are with thee in the Lord. Eubulus, one of our college, who carries this epistle to Vienna, is ready to live and die with thee." This epistle was sent by Victor and his colleagues, to Dionysius, bishop of Vienna; and from this passage, it is evident to a demonstration that presbyters were the successors of the apostles, and that by the term presbyter, therefore, only the ministers or teachers of the church were understood.‡

Clement Alexandrinus confirms this conclusion. That he identifies bishops and presbyters, as the same general ministerial order, would appear to be incontrovertible. In the very paragraph in which he makes an enumeration of officers, and in allusion to the heavenly progression, he ranks them under the two denominations of presbyters and deacons,† while in another passage, he places presbyters first, and bishops second, and widows fourth. Though only a presbyter, he yet styles himself a governor of the church. He ranks himself among the shepherds or pastors. He speaks of presbyters imposing hands, and giving their blessing. Presbyters, according to Clement, were entrusted with a dignified ministry. He expressly identifies bishop and presbyter, by using the one term

\*Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 39.

†See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 370, &c.

‡See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 372.

†See Ibid. p. 373.

for the other, in the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 14. Presbyters, according to him, occupy the chief seat on earth, and shall sit down among the four and twenty thrones in heaven. He repeatedly enumerates only presbyters and deacons, as the ministering officers of the church. The presbyter, with Clement Alexandrinus, was the highest order of the ministry, and occupied the chief seat, being clothed with the chief dignity in the church, and was therefore the true and proper successor of the apostles."†

Tertullian describes the presbyters as presiding among the churches, administering the communion and baptizing. His presidents or presbyters, therefore, cannot possibly refer to *ruling elders*, who never have been so called, or supposed to be capable of any of those functions. Preachers, therefore, must be the presidents of Tertullian, that is, the presiding presbyters of the apostles, who received this office, says Tertullian, "not by money, but by the suffrages of their brethren."

Origen says, "we of the clerical order, who preside over you;" and in speaking of the angels in the Apocalypse, he says, "that certain ruling presbyters in the churches were called angels." Bishops and presbyters, with Origen, were the *same order*; they RULED the church, *in common*, the PRESBYTERS PRESIDING, with the BISHOP, he having a *higher chair*, and being distinguished by the name of *bishop*.\* Origen does unquestionably allude to a class of officers similar to our ruling elders, but not under the title of presbyters. "There are," he says,† "some *rulers* appointed, whose duty it is to inquire concerning the manners and conversation of those who are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness."

Cyprian unquestionably employs the term presbyter to designate those who were appointed to preach, administer the sacraments, and with the bishop or president to govern the church. He appears to have had no officer corresponding to the ruling elder in his church, but to have referred all matters to the judgment of the people at large, as may be seen from several passages in his epistles.§ Such is the opinion of Professor Jameson, in his very able work on the Cyprianic polity of the church. He here abandons the position he had taken in his former works respecting the ruling elder, and gives it as his

†See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 374. "In his tract entitled, 'Quis dives salvetur,'" says the Bishop of Lincoln in his account of his writings, "the titles bishop and presbyter are indifferently applied to the same person. . . . The bishop was, therefore, in truth, the chief presbyter." Lond. 1835, p. 464.

\*See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 378.

†See Contra Colsum, lib. iii. p. 142, in Dr. Miller on the Eldership.

§See Ep. 6th, and Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 380, &c., and Jameson's Cyprianus Isotinus.

ultimate opinion that "those elders are the representatives of the sacred Plebs, or of the church, as she is opposed unto, or distinguished from church officers, properly so called, bishops or pastors, and deacons; therefore that they are not, in a strict sense, church officers. For I am so well assured of this truth, that only bishops, or presbyters and deacons, are, in a proper and strict sense, church officers, that if any thing I ever said can be proved to contradict this, I willingly revoke and retract it."

Again, he says, "I cannot, indeed, during the first three centuries, find express mention of these seniors or ruling elders: for I freely pass from some words of Tertullian and Origen, which I elsewhere overly mentioned, as containing them; as also from what I said of the Ignatian presbyters, their being ruling or non-preaching elders, and that without giving of much advantage to the Diocesanists, since in or about the Cyprianic age, in which time, as I judge, the author or interpolator wrote, there were belonging to the same church, parish, or congregation, diverse presbyters, who preached little, if any; and yet had power to dispense the word and sacraments." There is a passage indeed adduced by Dr. Miller, which seems to favor the distinct application of the term presbyter to those that did not preach. It is in his twenty-ninth Epistle, in which as he translates the words, Cyprian speaks of "*teaching presbyters*."\* The words in the original are "*cum presbyteris doctoribus*." Now were *doctoribus* an adjective, qualifying *presbyteris*, persons authorized to teach, the word would have been *docentibus*, and not *doctoribus*. That there were then a class of teaching presbyters called *doctors*, is evident from the same epistle, where it is said that Optatus was appointed *doctorem audientium*, that is, a teacher of the catechumens, who were in a state of preparation for admission to the church. The words, therefore, are to be rendered, "with the presbyters and doctors,"† or, "with those presbyters who are doctors." Our reformers generally recognized this distinction, which was practically carried out in Scotland, and adopted in its standards, and in the Form of Government adopted by the Westminster Assembly.‡ The Doctors, as distinct from the other presbyters or teachers, appear to have continued longer in the African than in the other churches, and are spoken of by Origen.§

The testimony of Firmilian is very much to our purpose, and in the teeth of those who claim for ruling elders the power of

\*Such is the rendering of Marshall. See his Works of Cyprian, p. 69.

†So it is rendered in the recent Translation issued at Oxford in 1844, p. 61.

‡See the First and Second Books of Discipline, and the Form referred to, as it is still in force in the Church of Scotland.

§See this view of the passage confirmed with great learning by Vitringa de Synag. pp. 494-497, which I read subsequently.



ordination. He says, "All power and grace are placed in the church, where *presbyters* presided, in whom is vested the power of baptizing, and imposition of hands, and *ordination*."\*\*

In the *Gesta Purgationis*, commonly referred to the fourth century, we meet with the following enumeration of church officers: "Presbyteri, diaconi et seniores," that is first, and as the highest order, *the presbyters*; next, *the deacons*; and then, *the seniors*, or representatives of the people; who are thus carefully distinguished from the presbyters; and also, in the following words, from the clergy generally: "Call the fellow-clergymen, AND *the seniors of the people (seniores plebis), ecclesiastical men.*" In the assembly of which they give an account, several letters were read, addressed "*to the clergy AND the seniors.*"\* These ecclesiastical officers are also alluded to by Optatus, under the same title of "*seniors.*"†

Hilary identifies bishops and presbyters, and thus clearly proves that he regarded presbyters as ordained preachers and pastors. He at the same time alludes to a class of officers called *seniors*, and whom he distinguishes from the *teachers* or *presbyters*. "For indeed," says he, "among all nations, old age is honorable. Hence it is that the synagogue, and afterwards the church, had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not; unless perhaps by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something." He testifies also, that "in Egypt, even to this day, the presbyters ordain in the bishop's absence," and that "the ordination of bishop and presbyter is the same, for both are priests."‡

Damasus, bishop of Rome, (A. D. 366,) says, "the primitive church only had these two sacred orders of presbyters and deacons."§

Aerius, in A. D. 368, also identifies the presbyter and the bishop as the pastor and administrator of sacraments, and the minister also of ordination.††

Basil, in A. D. 370, in his Commentary on Isaiah 3: 2, says, on the word presbyter, "Among the things that are threatened, is also the removal of the presbyter, seeing that the advantage of his presence is not small. A presbyter is he who is dignified with the first seat, and enrolled in the presbytery, bearing the character of a presbyter; especially, indeed, if he be an unmarried man, or if even, according to the law of the Lord,

\*\*Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 383.

\*See in Dr. Miller on the Eldership, p. 68. English edition.

†See do. do. p. 70.

‡See Prelacy and Presbytery, p. 213, and Dr. Miller on the Eldership, p. 71.

§See do. do. p. 391.

††See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 391, and for all the authorities.



the husband of one wife, having faithful children, etc.; this is the presbyter whom the Lord will take away from a sinful people.”\*

Gregory Nazianzen, (A. D. 370,) in a description of the church at Byzantium, observes, “Behold the bench of presbyters, dignified by age and understanding; the regularity of the deacons, not far from the same spirit; the decency of the readers; the attention of the people, as well in the men as in the women, equal in virtue.” Here are only presbyters, deacons, readers, and people, and yet, this church cannot be presumed to have been defective of any class of officers existing in other churches. Again, “As the presbyter is a minister, he is to preach; as he is a ruler, he is to make rules (or canons) for bishops and presbyters. And further, he ascends from being governed to be a governor; again, he is to feed the souls of men; to lead and conduct others in the way of truth; to act the joint priest with Christ; to build and rear up the world that is above; nay, and to be a head of the fulness of Christ.”

Gregory Nyssene (A. D. 371) is equally explicit in appropriating the term presbyter to the pastor or minister. “Seeing to you,” he says, “and to such as you, adorned with hoary wisdom from above, who are presbyters indeed, and justly styled the fathers of the church, the word of God conducts us to learn the doctrines of salvation, saying, (Deut. 32: 7,) ‘Ask thy Father, and he will show thee: thy presbyters, and they will tell thee.’”

Ambrose, of Milan, (A. D. 374,) tells us we are to understand by the word “angels” in the Apocalypse, the rectors or presidents, the *προεστώτες*, (or presiding presbyters,) because angel means messenger, and they who announce the word of God to the people are not improperly called angels.

Epiphanius says, “They say that he, (Aerius,) a Lybian by descent, having become a presbyter in Alexandria, *presided* (*προιστάτο*) over a church called Baucalis. For as many churches as are of the catholic church, at Alexandria, are under one archbishop; and over these, individually, *presbyters* are placed, to administer to the ecclesiastical exigencies of the neighboring inhabitants.”

Augustine is very careful to distinguish the presbyters from the representatives of the people. Writing to his charge, he directs his epistle, *Dilectissimis fratribus, clero senioribus et universæ plebi Ecclesiæ Hipponensis*: where first there is the general compellation *fratribus*, “brethren,” then there is a distribution of these brethren into the clergy, the elders, and the whole people; so that there were in that church *seniors*,

\*See in Sancti Basilii Opera. Paris. 1839. Tom. i. p. 636. The whole passage is in point.

distinguished both from the clergy and the rest of the people.

So again, *Contra cresconium Grammaticum: Omnes vos Episcopi, Presbyteri, Diaconi, et seniores scitis*: "All you bishops, elders, deacons, and seniors, do know." And again, cap. 56, *Peregrinus Presbyter, et seniores Ecclesiae Musticanae Regionis tale desiderium prosequuntur*; where again we read of presbyter and seniors in one church.

These seniors had power to reprove offenders, otherwise why should Augustine say, "when they were by the seniors reproved for their errors, and drunkenness is laid to a man's charge, etc. So that it was proper to the seniors to have the cognizance of delinquents and to reprove them."

The same Augustine, in Psalm 36, says, "Being requested by letters from the seniors of that church, it was needful for me to hear the cause of Primian," etc.

The letter of Purpurius to Silvanus saith, *Adhibite conclericos, et seniores plebis, Ecclesiasticos Viros, et inquirant quoe sunt istae Dissensiones: ut ea quoe sunt secundum fidei Procepta fiant*—where we see the joint power of these seniors with the clergy in ordering ecclesiastical affairs; that by their wisdom and care peace might be settled in the church; for which cause these seniors are called ecclesiastical men; and yet they are distinguished from clergymen.

They are mentioned again afterwards by Maximus, saying, *Loquor nomine seniorum populi Christiani*. Greg. Mag. distinguisheth them also from the clergy: *Tabellarium cum consensu seniorum et cleri memineris ordinandum*.

So again Optatus, who mentioning a persecution that did for a while scatter the church, saith, *Erant ecclesiae ex auro et argento quam plurima ornamenta, quae nec defodere terrae nec secum portare poterat, quare fidelibus senioribus commendavit*. Allaspineus, that learned antiquary, on this place acknowledges, that besides the clergy there were certain of the elders of the people, men of approved life, that did tend the affairs of the church, of whom this place is to be understood.\*

But it is enough. The same uniform testimony will be found to be given by all the Fathers who write on this subject at all, as may be seen in my examination of their testimony, in another place,† and in the numerous proofs there given of the facts that ordination and imposition of hands were regarded in the early church, and by many later fathers, as the functions of presbyters who were identified with bishops, as the pastors and preachers of the church.‡ Any one who will consult Binius,

\*See these passages in Smectymnuus, p. 74.

†Presbytery and Prelacy, pp. 397-408.

‡See Presbytery and Prelacy, B. i. ch. x. pp. 212-234. Various additional authorities may be found in Martene de Antiq. Eccl. Ritibus. See Index, order *presbyter*, and the various volumes referred to.

will find that presbyters were the pastors of the churches, and might even ordain;§ that he quotes the fourth Council of Carthage as decreeing that the seniors of the churches should be esteemed worthy of great honor,\*\* that they were anciently called *senatus pauper* in the church of Rome††—that in Africa all the officers of the church, of whatever degree, who were associated with the bishop in the government of the church, were called his senate;‡‡ and that if these officers undertook to ordain, they were punished. Such also is the undoubted opinion of the schoolmen, who recognize only the two orders of presbyters or bishops, and deacons,\* of all the Oriental churches;† of many prelatists;‡ and of the universal church.§§ Nothing, therefore, can be more certain, as it appears to our minds, than the fact that THE TERM PRESBYTER (πρεσβυτερος) IS EVERY WHERE THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND IN THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS, TO BE UNDERSTOOD OF THE TEACHERS OR PRESBYTERS, AND NEVER OF THE RULING ELDERS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE—nor can we see any weight in any reason which has been assigned for the opposite opinion, nor any necessity for adopting it in order to sustain the scriptural claims and character of the ruling elder. On the contrary, the application of the titles of presbyter and bishop to these officers obscures the whole question of the polity of the apostolic churches; renders ambiguous and general the very title upon which the order of the ministry rests; weakens, and in some measure nullifies, our arguments for one order of ministers against the pretensions of prelacy; leaves the distinction between ministers and ruling elders altogether indefinite; leads to wrong and misconceived views of the nature and duties of ruling elders; gives origin to the whole controversy now agitating the church respecting the *rights* of elders to ordain; and would eventually DESTROY *either the separate order of ministers or the separate order of ruling elders*, since, if both are to be understood by the same terms, both must possess the qualifications required by those to whom these terms are given, and both, therefore, must be required to discharge all the duties of the officers thus qualified and named.

Before leaving this branch of our subject it may be proper to support our views by one or two authorities. Mr. Boyce in his very able and learned work, “A Clear Account of the

§ Binii Concilia Generalia, tom. iv. p. 558; vii. 731; i. 742, 415, 539, 734, 573, 400; ix. 406; vii. 731 and 887; iii. 835. See also Morinus de Sacr. Eccl. Ordinationibus, pt. iii. p. 276, § 5, &c.

\*\*Tom. i. p. 730, Can. 83.

††Tom. i. p. 85.

‡‡See tom. ix. Index “Seves.”

\*Tom. i. p. 731.

†See do. do. pp. 409-414.

‡See do. do. p. 415, &c.

§§See do. do. p. 223, &c.



Ancient Episcopacy," says,\*\* "I confess many of the reformed churches have a sort of elders that are not the same with the presbyters of the primitive church, because the latter were properly ordained to the sacred office of the ministry, and empowered thereby to baptize, preach, and administer the sacraments, when desired by the parochial bishops, whose curates they were. But even these very elders in the reformed churches do very well answer to the seniores plebis, that were distinct from the presbyters, and were of laudable use in the primitive church, (as Blondel has fully shown in his book, *De Jure Plebis in regimine Ecclesiastico*.)"

Grotius says, "that the perpetual offices in the church are two, that of presbyters and deacons. Those I call presbyters, with all the ancient church, who fed the church with the preaching of the gospel, the sacraments, and the keys." (*De Imperio*, c. x. p. 267; in *ibid.* p. 39.) "By all which," say the authors of *Smectymnuus*, who were members of the Westminster Assembly, "it is apparent, first, that in the ancient church there were some called seniors; secondly, that these seniors were not clergymen; thirdly, that they had a stake in governing the church and managing the affairs thereof; and fourthly, that seniors were distinguished from the rest of the people."\*

It will be interesting to illustrate the subject from the history of the church of England. Among the Culdees we know that there was always a number of lay brethren associated with the presbyters in the government of their communities. Many of the Culdees were laymen. Bede himself admits, says Jameson,† that of the many who daily came from the country of the Scots into the province of the Angles over which Oswald reigned, only some were presbyters, where he limits the term presbyter to those who could preach and baptize.

Every member of the fraternity or college had a right, whether lay or clerical, "to sit, speak, and reason in their Synodical assemblies."‡ Boece says that before the time of Palladius "the people by their suffrages chose Bishops from the Monks and Culdees."§ Sir James Dalrymple says that "in electing the bishop they must have the consensus religiosorum virorum civitatis, which must be meant of the laics and its like, also the laics had the same share in settling the Culdees, who were their pastors."††

"And herein also of questmen," says Burns in his *Ecclesias-*

\*\*London, 1712, p. 208.

\*See also Vitringa de Syn. pp. 479, 482, 484, and Fleury's Hist. Eccl. tom. viii., in Luig, p. 314.

†Hist. p. 66, 67.

‡Jameson, in eo. p. 57.

§In *Ibid.* p. 98, 99.

††Collections, p. 134.



tical Laws, "sidesmen, or assistants. Note, the office of church-wardens, so far as it relates to the repairs or other matters concerning the church, is treated of under the title *Church*; their cognizance of crimes and offences, falleth in under the title *Visitation*; and other branches of their duty, under divers other titles respectively; here it is treated only concerning their office in general, or such other particulars as do not fall in more properly elsewhere.

"In ancient Episcopal Synods, the bishops were wont to summon divers creditable persons out of every parish, to give information of, and to attest the disorders of clergy and people. These were called *testes synodales*; and were in after times a kind of impanelled jury, consisting of two or three or more persons in every parish, who were upon oath to present all heretics and other irregular persons. Ken. Par. Ant. 649.

"And these in process of time became standing officers in several places, especially in great cities, and from hence were called Synod's men, and by corruption sidesmen; they are also sometimes called questmen, from the nature of their office, in making inquiry concerning offences.

"But for the most part this whole office is now devolved upon the churchwardens, together with that other office which their name more properly importeth, of taking care of the church and of the goods thereof, which they had of very ancient time."\*

"By Can. 118. The churchwardens and sidesmen shall be chosen the first week after Easter, or some week following, according to the direction of the ordinary.

"And by Can. 89. All churchwardens or questmen in every parish, shall be chosen by the joint consent of the minister and the parishioners, if it may be; but if they cannot agree upon such a choice, then the minister shall choose one, and the parishioners another; and without such a joint or several choice none shall take upon them to be churchwardens."†

"Again," says Burns, "the ancient method was not only for the clergy, but the body of the people within such a district, to appear at Synods, or (as we now call them) general visitations; (for what we now call visitations were really the annual synods, the laws of the church by visitations always being visitations parochial;) the way was, to select a certain number, at the discretion of the ordinary, to give information upon oath concerning the manners of the people within the district; which persons the rule of the canon law upon this head supposes to have been selected, while the synod was sitting; but afterwards, when the body of the people began to be excused from attend-

\*Burns' Eccl. Law, vol. i. p. 398.

†Do. do. p. 401.

ance, it was directed in the citation, that four, six, or eight, according to the proportion of the district, should appear together with the clergy, to represent the rest, and to be the testes synodales, as the canon law elsewhere styles them. But all this while, we find nothing of churchwardens presenting, till a little before the reformation, when we find the churchwardens began to present, either by themselves, or with two or three more credible parishioners joined with them; and this (as was before observed) seemeth evidently to be the original of that office which our canons call the office of sidesmen or assistants. Id. 59, 60, 61.”\*

“Every churchwarden,” he adds, “is also an overseer of the poor by the statute of the 43 el. c. 2, and as such is joined with the overseer appointed by the justices of the peace in all matters relating to the poor; and indeed the churchwardens were the original overseers long before there were any others specially appointed by act of parliament.

“By Can. 89. The churchwardens or questmen shall not continue any longer than one year in that office, except perhaps they be chosen in like manner.”

The Rev. William Jones, in his Churchman’s Catechism, in reference to the same subject, says, “What lay-officers have authority to act for the discipline of the church?

“The churchwardens, chancellors, officials and officers of the court should be laymen.

“Why so?

“That the people when they are corrected for their offences may not think themselves hardly dealt with; the persons to whom they are committed being of their own order.

“How long have lay officers acted in the affairs of the church?

“Almost ever since the conversion of the Roman empire, for 1300 years; when persons learned in the laws were granted to the Christians for settling their differences.”†

\*Burns’ Eccl. Law, vol. i. p. 405.

†Works, vol. xi. p. 421. See also Conder’s View of Religions, p. 165. Bernard, in his work on the Synagogue, says, the seniors were “somewhat analogous to our churchwardens.”

## CHAPTER IV.

The views of the Reformers on the subject of the Eldership, and on the application to it of the term *Presbyter*.

We deem it altogether unnecessary to adduce any proof that the reformed churches generally adopted the principle that the laity had a right to participate in the government of the church; and that as generally they carried out this belief by the appointment of delegated representatives, chosen by the people, and most commonly called seniors, elders, assistants, commissioners, or by some similar and analogous name. Dr. Miller has left every one without excuse who doubts either of these positions. § And the fact that the laity were so represented in the ancient British churches, in the Waldensian churches, and also in the Syrian churches in the distant East, where lay representatives of the people continue to exist to the present day, is very strong presumption of its apostolic origin and practice.

From these ancient churches, Calvin and the other reformers adopted their principles of ecclesiastical polity and discipline. Now besides ministers of the word and sacraments, the Waldenses always had, and held to be necessary, "a certain college of men," to use the words of Bucer concerning them, "excelling in prudence and gravity of spirit, whose office it is to admonish and correct offending brethren." In their ancient discipline, which dates back to the twelfth century, after treating of ministers or pastors, it goes on to say, that "God has given to his people to choose from themselves guides (or pastors) of the people, and ancients in their charges according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ."\* In the Confession of Faith, now in use among them, these officers are called "*les anciens*," that is, ancients, seniors, or elders: † "*selon la pratique de l'Eglise Ancienne*," "according to the practice of the ancient church," where the same word is used. It is hence apparent that among the Waldenses the term *presbyter*, which is in Spanish, *presbytero*, and in French, *presbtre*, or *prestre*, was not applied by them to the representatives who sit in their assemblies, but the words "*regidors del poble et*

§ See his work on the Ruling Elder, and Letters on the Christian Ministry, 2d ed.

\* This is the translation given in Perrin's History of the Waldenses, translated by Lennard. Lond. 1624. p. 54. And that these mean the ruling elders appears from p. 73, where he calls them "the pastors and ancients," and in reference to their synods. See the original in Moreland, and quoted in Plea for Presbytery, p. 350, and given also in Blair's Hist. vol. i. p. 533, and Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 511.

† See Le Livre de Famille, &c. Geneve, 1830. Conf. of F. art. XXXI. p. 103.

*preires*," and as it regards ordination, it is expressly provided by their Discipline (Article 93) that "the body of the pastors of the church shall give the imposition of hands."‡

This point is important to our argument, for it can be shown that the whole institution of the office of ruling elders in the reformed churches, may be traced to the Waldenses. The Bohemian brethren, it is well known, were a branch of the Waldenses, having removed from Picardy about two hundred years before the time of Huss. Now in their form of government we have the following direction: "*Tell it to the Church*," that is, to the "*Guides*, whereby the Church is ruled;" and that we may be at no loss who these "Rulers" were, we are told, in a preceding chapter, that they were seniors chosen from among the people for the purpose of governing; and informed that they were distinct from the pastors.§ And in a Confession drawn up by them in the year 1535, they say,\*\* "*Elders (Presbyteri, seu Censores morum)* are honest, grave, pious men, chosen out of the whole congregation, that they may act as guardians of all the rest. To them authority is given, (either alone, or in connexion with the pastor,) to admonish and rebuke those who transgress the prescribed rules, also to reconcile those who are at variance, and to restore to order whatever irregularity they may have noticed. Likewise in secular matters, relating to domestic concerns, the younger men and youths are in the habit of asking their counsel, and being faithfully advised by them. From the example and practice of the *ancient church*, we believe that this ought always to be done. See Ex. 18: 21, Deut. 1: 18. 1 Cor. 6: 2-4, 5. 1 Tim. 5: 17."

Comenius, the Bohemian historian, and last bishop or superintendent, calls these the assistants of the pastor, and says: "Such are our seniors; they are styled judges of the congregation or censors of the people, and also ruling elders."\*

Now mark the bearing of this on our present inquiry. Luther, in some of his early writings, had expressed an unfavorable opinion of the Bohemian brethren; but, upon being more fully informed of their doctrine and order, and more especially of their provision for maintaining sound *discipline*, by means of their *Eldership* in each congregation, he changed his opinion, and became willing both to speak and to write strongly in their favor. Hence his highly commendatory Preface to their "Confession of Faith," of which mention has been already made. And hence, at a still later period, the following strong expressions in favor of the same people: "There hath not arisen any people, since the times of the apostles, whose church hath

‡Discipline of the Vaudois.

§See Dr. Miller on the Eldership, p. 108, 2d ed.

\*\*Do. do. p. 110.

\*See Dr. Miller on the Eldership, p. 114.



come nearer to the apostolical doctrine and order, than the brethren of Bohemia."

"Bucer, the Swiss reformer, having largely conversed with two of the Waldensian pastors, declared, that they have preserved among them the discipline of Christ, which constrains us to give them this praise." In 1533, Melancthon wrote them as follows: "In reality I do not at all disapprove of that very severe manner of exercising the discipline, which is practiced in your churches. Would to God it were enforced with a little more rigor in ours."

We have also evidence that to them Calvin was indebted for his idea of this office.\* "We know that this venerable man before he was expelled from Geneva 1538, and while he was struggling and suffering so much for want of an efficient discipline, made no attempt to introduce the institution in question." When Calvin first settled in Geneva in 1536, he found the reformed religion already introduced and to a considerable extent supported, under the ministry of Farel and Viret, two bold and faithful advocates of evangelical truth. Such, however, was the opposition made to the doctrines which they preached, and especially to the purity of discipline which they struggled hard to establish, by the licentious part of the inhabitants, among whom were some of the leading magistrates, that in 1538, Calvin and his colleagues were expelled from their places in the Genevan church, because they refused to administer the Lord's Supper to the vilest of the population who chose to demand the privilege. In a paroxysm of popular fury, those faithful ministers of Christ were commanded to leave the city within two days. During this temporary triumph of error and profligacy, Calvin retired to Strasburg, where he was appointed Professor of Divinity and pastor of a church, and where he remained nearly four years.

In 1540, the year before he was recalled to Geneva, *he corresponded with the Bohemian brethren*, and made himself particularly acquainted with their plan of church government, which he regarded with deep interest; an interest no doubt greatly augmented by the sufferings which he had recently undergone in fruitless efforts to maintain the purity of ecclesiastical discipline; in which efforts he had been baffled chiefly by the want of such an efficient system as the Bohemian churches possessed. "It was when in Strasburg," says Mr. Lorimer in his work on the Eldership, p. 162, "that he was led more fully to study the office of the Ruling Elder, especially in connection with the history of the Bohemian and Waldensian churches, which could trace their origin to a very remote an-

\*See Dr. Miller on the Eldership, p. 118, and 116 and 117. Also, Dr. Laing's Religion and Education in America, p. 315.

tiquity, and which had always enjoyed the advantage of a numerous and powerful body of such officers. Calvin clearly saw that it was only an ecclesiastical staff of this kind which could remedy such disorders as those which had prevailed at Geneva; that, in short, had the ministers been supported by a suitable *body of representatives* from the congregation, the tumult would in all probability never have occurred." In the course of his correspondence, while yet in exile for his fidelity, Calvin addressed the Bohemian pastors in the following pointed terms: "I heartily congratulate your churches, upon which, besides sound doctrine, God hath bestowed so many excellent gifts. Of these gifts, it is none of the least to have such pastors to govern and order them;—to have a people themselves so affected and disposed;—to be constituted under so noble a form of government;—to be adorned with the most excellent discipline, which we justly call most excellent, and indeed the only bond by which obedience can be preserved. I am sure we find with us, by woful experience, what the worth of it is, by the want of it; nor yet can we by any means attain to it. On this account it is, that I am often faint in my mind and feeble in the discharge of my duties. Indeed I should quite despair did not this comfort me, that the edification of the church is always the work of the Lord, which he himself will carry on by his own power though all help besides should fail. Yet still it is a great and rare blessing to be aided by so necessary a help. Therefore I shall not consider our church as properly strengthened, until they can be bound together by that bond." And the pious historian after giving this extract from the venerable Reformer adds: "It so happened, in the course of divine Providence, that, not long afterwards, this eminent man was recalled to minister in the church of Geneva, where he established *the very same kind of discipline* which is now famed throughout the world."

In the year 1541 Calvin says: "I detailed to the senate my labor; I showed them that the church could not stand, unless a certain form of government were appointed, such as is prescribed to us in the word of God, and was observed in the ancient church. I then touched certain heads, whence they might understand what I wished. But because the whole matter could not be explained, I begged that there should be given us those who might confer with us. Six were appointed to us. Articles will be written concerning the whole government of a church, which we shall afterwards lay before the senate."\*

The committee at Geneva reported, laws were prescribed, and a constitution instituted by the General Council, on the 20th of Nov., 1541. The consistory was to contain a double number of laymen, chosen annually; that is, at first it consisted of

\*Epist. 50.

the six ministers, two laymen from the lesser senate, a council of twenty-five; and ten from the greater, or council of two hundred; one of the syndics presiding. That Calvin did afterwards, says Dr. Wilson, attempt to justify the reception of lay presbyters, from the authority of the Scriptures, his writings evince. It is perfectly clear, nevertheless, that it was adopted at first by him as an expedient for reducing the church at Geneva to a state of discipline, which should secure the reformation at that place. He probably preferred the name consistory, because the judicatory was composed of laymen and elders, for since ordination is by laying on of the hands of the presbytery, if those laymen were members of a presbytery, then they must impose hands, and give an authority which they possessed not. As if apprehensive, also, of the impropriety of denominating men presbyters who had received no ordination, he called them inspectors."†

Such then was the original of Calvin's lay representatives of the people. And that he did not regard them as properly entitled to the name of *presbyters* appears, not only from the different name he gave to the court of which they formed a part, and the name he gave to them, but from his positive instructions. In his *Institutions*, Book 4, chap. 3, he has the following passage, which is explicit. "In calling those who preside over churches by the appellations of "Bishops," "Elders" and "Pastors," without any distinction, I have followed the usage of the Scriptures, which apply all these terms to express the same meaning. For to all who discharge the ministry of the word, they give the title of "Bishops." So when Paul enjoins Titus to "ordain elders in every city," he immediately adds, "for a bishop must be blameless." So in another place, he salutes more bishops than one in one church. And in the Acts of the Apostles he is declared to have sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus, whom in his address to them he calls "Bishops." Here it must be observed that we have enumerated only those offices which consist *in the ministry of the word*; nor does Paul mention any other in the 4th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians which we have quoted. But in the Epistle to the Romans and the first Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates others, as "powers," "gifts of healing," "interpretation of tongues," "governments," "care of the poor." Those functions which are merely temporary, I omit, as foreign to our present subject. But there are two which

† "Non solos verbi ministros sedere iudices in consistorio; sed numerum duplo majorem partim ex minori senatu ex delectis senioribus esse, ut vocant, partim ex majore deligi, ad haec unum fere ex syndicis praesidere." Epist. 167. "Deliguntur quotannis duodecim seniores; nempe ex minori senatu duo, reliqui ex ducentis, sive sint indigenae sive ascriptitii cives. Qui probe et fideliter munere suo perfuncti sunt, loco non moventur; nisi," &c. See Dr. Wilson on the Gov't of the Ch. p. 237.



perpetually remain, "governments," and "the care of the poor." "Governors," I apprehend to have been persons of advanced years, *selected from the people* to unite with the bishops in giving admonition and exercising discipline. For no other interpretation can be given of that injunction, "He that ruleth let him do it with diligence." For from the beginning, every church has had its senate, or council, composed of pious, grave and holy men, who were invested with that jurisdiction, for the correction of vices, of which we shall soon treat. Now, that this was not the regulation of a single age, experience itself demonstrates. This office of government is necessary therefore in every age."§

Dr. Miller has undoubtedly shown that both Zuingle and Ecolompadius before the time of Calvin had openly taught the scriptural claims of the office of ruling elders, whom they denominated elders of another kind, that is, senators, leaders or counsellors, or as the latter calls them, in accordance with ancient usage, "*seniors*."‡ A consistory was established at Zurich, A. D. 1525, for the decision of matrimonial and other causes which had hitherto been carried before the bishop of Constance,\* and another at St. Gallen, A. D. 1526, for the same object.\* But the constitution of these courts shows plainly that whatever may have been the subsequent views of these reformers, they did not regard the office of ruler in the light in which we now consider the ruling elder. For in both cases the members of these courts were chosen either by the state, as at Zurich, or by popular vote. Zuingle thus delineates his views.† "I will briefly explain the use made of the council in these affairs, since we are calumniated by some for leaving to the decision of two hundred persons, that which ought to be referred to the whole church, consisting of seven thousand. Thus then the case stands. We the ministers of Zurich have some time back freely admonished the council that we consent to refer to them *what properly belongs to the judgment of the whole church*, on no other condition than this, that in their deliberations and decrees they shall take the word of God for their guide. We have reminded them also, that they on no other terms stand in the place of the church, than as the church has *voluntarily* (benigne) consented to receive their decrees. We proclaimed the same sentiments to the church at large; observing to them, that in times like these, when numbers are swayed by perverse affections, which they would vainly have to be taken for the suggestions of the Spirit, many things can-

§Scott's Continuation of Milnor, vol. 2, p. 521.

‡On the Eldership, ch. vi. p. 121, 122.

\*Scott's Continuation of Milnor, p. 578.

†Scott's Continuation of Milnor, vol. iii. p. 32, and p. 91, and T. Op. ii. 248.



not be safely committed to the votes of a multitude: not that we have any apprehensions that God would desert his church, but because, while all its institutions are yet green and tender among us, the occasions of contention are to be avoided. We have recommended it therefore to the people to leave to the council the regulation of external matters, under the direction of the word of God; promising that, if ever we see the authority of that word likely to be disregarded, we will not fail to cry out and give them warning. To this the church has hitherto consented, not by any formal resolution, but by a peaceable and grateful acquiescence." He then refers to a scriptural example, by which he conceives such a course to be sanctioned, and proceeds: "That the council in these affairs acts not in its own name, but in that of the church, is evident from this, that whatever is determined here, in Zurich, (as for instance concerning images, the eucharist and the like,) is left free to the churches in the country, which consist of smaller numbers, to be adopted or rejected, as seems to them fit. And our measures have so succeeded that the blessing of God upon them is manifest. We are likewise careful to instruct the people on those subjects on which the council has to decide, that whatever the latter, in conjunction with the ministers, ordains, is, in fact, already ordained in the minds of the faithful."

"A General Synod also of the clergy of the canton was appointed, to assemble twice every year, with one of the burgo-masters and eight members of the council, (somewhat resembling, therefore, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,) to superintend the doctrine and manners of the clergy, and the conduct of all ecclesiastical affairs."

Æcolompadius, however, makes an entire distinction between the church and the state, on which subject he delivered a copious oration before the council of Berne. He there takes the position "that what may or even can be done by the magistrates does not supersede, indeed that it scarcely at all takes the place of, a well administered church discipline."

In "The Confession of the Churches of Switzerland," adopted as a platform of union and agreement at the conference held at Basle, A. D. 1536, drawn up by Bullinger, Myconius and Grynceus, and translated into English by the Scottish Martyr, George Wishart, about A. D. 1540, in Art. xviii. it calls ministers "presidents, heads and teachers." In Art. xix., which treats of "the duty of ministers or officers," it declares that one end of the ministry is, "that by a godly consent and agreement of them who are chosen by the ministers or magistrates for correction," &c. And in Art. xvii. of "the choosing ministers or officers," it is declared that their election "is well and justly approved by the voice of the church and the imposi-

tion of the hands of the heads of the priests," that is, of those appointed to the duty. Now, from this we learn, that in accordance with our interpretation of 1 Tim. 5: 17, *moderators* are called *presidents*; that ruling elders are not called by this name nor founded upon any express divine authority, but are called officers chosen by the ministers or magistrates; and that only ministers were authorized to assist in the imposition of hands; and lastly, that these were the views taken by the early founders of the Scottish church.\*

We introduce these quotations the rather because they confirm so pointedly our view of the foundation on which the office of ruling elders as representatives of the people rests—the power given by Christ to every member of his church, to take part in the ecclesiastical government of his church, and the power therefore of the people to act in this matter, either as a body or by chosen delegates, as the example of the Scripture warrants, and which experience has so fully justified as both wise and necessary.

Other Swiss cantons hearing of the "*orders*" of Geneva, were led to imitate them. Calvin, in reply to one church which sought his advice, says, "it would certainly be great impudence to disapprove of that in your case, which we ourselves have adopted as both good and useful."† Geneva and Lausanne, from their contiguity to France, so greatly influenced the work of reformation in that kingdom, that, so early as 1550, the reformed societies of that country were generally in communion with the church at Geneva, and had adopted the doctrines of Calvin. The Gallic confession, exhibited to Charles IX. in 1561, thus expresses their views: "We believe that the true church ought to be governed by that discipline which our Lord Jesus Christ has decreed; namely, that there should be in it pastors, *prebyters* or *seniors*, and deacons; that purity of doctrine may be preserved, vice restrained, the poor and others in affliction provided for," &c.

In the next century, the churches were left by the acts of the synod of Charenton, in 1645, to their choice on the subject of elders.‡

Calvin's discipline spread from France to the Netherlands. For these churches, when scattered by persecution, held a synod at Emden in 1569, at which it was agreed, "that in the French congregations, the Geneva catechism might be held, and in the Dutch that of Heidelberg." Also, they declared that "no church shall have, or exercise dominion over another, and

\*See a republication of this inaccessible Tract, and of Wishart's Translation in the Miscellany of the Wodrow Society, vol. i. Eduit. 1844. Art. 1.

†Ep. 55.

‡See quoted below.

no minister, elder, or deacon, shall bear rule over others of the same degree;" which is Calvin's order.

The first presbytery erected in England, was convened in 1572, when eleven elders were chosen, and their proceedings were entitled, "The Orders of Wadsworth;" imitating the style of the order of the church at Geneva.

Knox visited Geneva in 1554, and became the disciple and friend of Calvin, and used both at Frankfort and at Geneva, in the English congregation over which he presided, "The Book of Common Order," which Calvin assisted in drawing up. In this there is provision made for "an assembly or consistory" of "the pastors or ministers" and "elders," who are thus carefully distinguished in their titles, and also in their functions. For of ministers, of whom it recognizes two kinds, "the pastor" and "the teacher or doctor," (ch. i. and iv.) it is said, their "chief office standeth in preaching the word of God and ministering the sacraments," under which terms it evidently includes ordination, since it quotes in proof of this general definition of power, Acts 13: 2, 3, where the presbyters of Antioch ordained Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto God had called them, (see ch. i.) Of elders it is said, "they differ from the ministers in that they preach not the word *nor* minister the sacraments," (ch. ii.) where the same definition is repeated, so that elders are of course excluded from the work of ordination and imposition of hands.

In the following year Knox, with others, drew up "The First Book of Discipline," which was adopted in Scotland. This provides for the election of "elders" or "seniors," (ch. x. §§ 2, 5. 8,) which last name is most frequently used. "The election (ch. x. § 3) of elders and deacons ought to be made every year once, which we judge to be most convenient on the first day of August; lest of long continuance of such officers, men presume upon the liberty of the kirk: (and yet) it hurteth not that one be received in office more years than one, so that he be appointed yearly (thereto) by common and free election; provided always, that the deacons and treasurers be not compelled to receive the (same) office again for the space of three years. How the votes and suffrages may be best received, so that every man may give his vote freely, every several church may take such order as best seems (to) them.

"The elders being elected, must be admonished of their office, which is to assist the ministers in all public affairs of the church; to wit, in determining and judging causes, in giving admonition to the licentious liver, in having respect to the manners and conversation of all men within their charge. For by



the gravity of the seniors, the light and unbridled life of the licentious must be corrected and bridled.

"We think it not necessary," it is added, "that any public stipend shall be appointed, either to the elders, or yet to the deacons, because their travel continues but for a year; and also because that they are not co occupied with the affairs of the church, but that reasonably they may attend upon their domestic business."\*

It is further provided, (chap. iv. § 10)† that "other ceremony than the public approbation of the people, and declaration of the chief minister, that the person there presented is appointed to serve the church, we cannot approve; for albeit the apostles used imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremony we judge not necessary."

It will however be observed, that all that was regarded as equivalent to imposition of hands was then performed by the *presiding minister*, without any concurrence of the elders in the act.

In the Second Book of Discipline, which was adopted in 1578, and continued in force in the Church of Scotland until the adoption of the Westminster standards, in chap. ii. it is said, "The whole policy of the kirk consisteth in doctrine, discipline, and distribution. With doctrine is annexed the administration of sacraments," including of course ordination, as in the Book of Common Order; "and according to the parties of this division, arises a threefold sort of office-bearers in the kirk, to wit, of ministers or preachers, elders or governors, and deacons or distributors."

There are (chap. ii. § 6)‡ four ordinary functions or offices in the church of God: the office of the pastor, minister, or bishop; the doctor; the presbyter or elder; and the deacon.

It is added (chap. iii. § 3,) "All these should take these titles and names only (lest they be exalted and puffed up in themselves) which the Scriptures give unto them, as those

\*Dr. McCrie, in the second volume of his life of Calvin, proves that the continued practice of the church, was the "annual election" of elders: see also Dr. Aiton's Life of Henderson, p. 336. This author adds, "A layman as elder cannot moderate in the assembly, or in any other church court, because such meetings begin and end with prayer, and ruling elders have no calling to pray publicly in our church; they are but assistants in discipline."

†This opinion respecting imposition of hands, was not peculiar to the Reformers, but common also to the Romish doctors. See Calderwood's *Altare Damascenum*, p. 174, 175. See also Seaman's *Vindication of Ordination*, p. 75, 78; and Courayer on English Ordination, passim.

‡In chapter xi. § 9, it is added, "As to bishops, if the name be properly taken, they are all one with the ministers, as before was declared. For it is not a name of superiority and lordship, but of office and watching. Yet, because in the corruption of the church, this name (as others) has been abused, and yet is likely to be; we cannot allow the fashion of their new chosen bishops, neither of the chapters that are electors of them to such offices as they are chosen to."



which import labor, travel, and work, and are names of offices and service and not of idleness, dignity, worldly honor, or pre-eminence, which by Christ our master is expressly reprovèd and forbidden."

The duty of the pastors is thus expressed (chap. iv. § 6-12): "Unto the pastors appertains teaching of the word of God, in season and out of season, publicly and privately, always travelling to edify and discharge his conscience, as God's word prescribes to him.

"Unto the pastors only appertains the administration of the sacraments, in like manner as the administration of the word; for both are appointed by God as means to teach us, the one by the ear, and the other by the eyes and other senses, that by both knowledge may be transferred to the mind.

"It appertains by the same reason to the pastors to pray for the people, and namely for the flock committed to his charge, and to bless them in the name of the Lord, who will not suffer the blessings of his faithful servants to be frustrated.

"He ought also to watch over the manners of his flock, that the better he may apply the doctrine to them in reprehending the dissolute persons, and exhorting the godly to continue in the fear of the Lord.

"It appertains to the minister, after lawful proceeding by the eldership, to pronounce the sentence of binding and loosing upon any person, according unto the power of the keys granted unto the church.

"It belongs to him likewise, after lawful proceedings in the matter by the eldership, to solemnize marriage betwixt them that are to be joined therein; and to pronounce the blessing of the Lord upon them that enter in that holy band in the fear of God.

"And generally *all public denunciations* that are to be made in the kirk before the congregation, *concerning the ecclesiastical* affairs, belong to the office of a minister; for he is a messenger and herald betwixt God and the people in all these affairs."

The office of "Doctor" is maintained and fully described in Chapter fifth.\*

Of "elders" who do not "labor in word and doctrine," (chap. vii. § 1,) it is said, (chap. vi.) "The word Elder in the Scripture sometimes is the name of age, sometimes of office. When it is the name of an office sometimes it is taken largely, comprehending as well the pastors and doctors, as them who are called seniors or elders.

"In this our division we call these elders whom the Apostles

\*There is thought to be an allusion to this office in 1 Cor. 14: 30. See Bernard's Synagogue and the Church, p. 249.

call presidents or governors. Their office, as it is ordinary so it is perpetual, and always necessary in the church of God. The eldership is a spiritual function, as is the ministry. Elders once lawfully called to the office and having gifts of God meet to exercise the same, may not leave it again. Albeit such a number of elders may be chosen in certain congregations, that one part of them may relieve another for a reasonable space, as was among the Levites under the law in serving of the temple. The number of the elders in every congregation cannot well be limited, but should be according to the bounds and necessities of the people."

Of church sessions it is said, (chap. vii. § 10,) "The first kind and sort of assemblies, although they be within particular congregations, yet they exercise THE POWER, AUTHORITY, AND JURISDICTION OF THE CHURCH WITH MUTUAL CONSENT, and therefore bear sometimes the name of the church. When we speak of the elders of the particular congregations, we mean not that every particular parish church can or may have their own particular elderships, specially to landwart, but we think three or four, more or fewer particular churches, may have one common eldership to them all, to judge their ecclesiastical causes. Albeit this is meet, that some of the elders be chosen out of every particular congregation, to concur with the rest of their brethren in the common assembly, and to take up the delations of offences within their own churches, and bring them to the assembly. This we gather of the practice of the primitive church, where elders or colleges of seniors were constituted in cities and famous places."

As for elders, it is added in chap. xii. § 5, "There would be some to be censurers of the manners of the people, one or more in every congregation; but not an assembly of elders in every particular church, but only in towns and famous places where resort of men of judgment and ability to that effect may be had, where the elders of the particular churches about may convene together, and have a common eldership and assembly place among them, to treat of all things that concern the congregations of which they have the oversight."

In "The Form of Process of the Judicatories of the Church of Scotland," adopted in 1707, chap. i. § 2, it is said,\* "It is agreeable to and founded on the word of God, that some others, besides those who labor in the word and doctrine, be church governors, to join with the ministers of the word in the government of the church, and exercise of discipline and oversight of the manners of the people, which officers are called ruling elders: as also that the church be governed by several sorts of

\*See Books of Discipline, &c. Edinburgh, 1836, p. 131.

judicatories, and one in subordination to the other, such as church sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and general assemblies."

In Stewart's Collections, which was formerly of authority in this country as well as in Scotland, we find among much to the same purpose the following hints:—

In Book I. Title I. § 21,\* "Our church doth condemn any doctrine that TENDS to support the people's power of ordaining their ministers; for by the 5th act of Assembly, 1698, upon information that a divine of the Church of England had in his sermon charged them as corruptors of the word of God, who, to favor popular ordinations, had caused that passage of Scripture, Acts 6: 3, "whom *we* may appoint over this business," to be printed "whom *ye* may appoint," &c., they did unanimously disclaim the above-mentioned error of the press, and did declare they did not own any other reading of that text to be according to the original but "whom *we* may appoint," &c. This of course limits ordination to ministers.

Describing the form of ordination services, it is said, (§ 24,) "In the most conspicuous place of the church, and near to the pulpit, a table and seats being placed, where the brethren of the presbytery, the heritors and elders of the congregation, with the magistrates and council, when in burghs royal, are to sit, together with the intrant, so that ALL THE MINISTERS may conveniently give him imposition of hands, and *the others may take him by the hand*, when thereunto called; the minister is to come from the pulpit to the foresaid place, where the intrant kneeling (for the more decent and convenient laying on of hands) and the brethren standing, he, *as their mouth*, in their Master's name and authority, doth in and by prayer set the candidate apart (not only *the* minister who prays but *all the* brethren that conveniently can, laying their hands upon his head) to the office of the ministry, invoking God for his blessing to this effect."

In Title VII. of Ruling Elders, it is said, "He is called a ruling elder, because to rule and govern the church is the chief part of his charge and employment therein; and albeit he may act as a deacon, yet his principal business is to rule well, and it belongs not to him to preach or teach." "Their ordination is to be *by the minister of the congregation, or by one from the presbytery*, in the case above supposed, in the presence of the congregation, upon a Lord's day after sermon is ended in the forenoon; at which time, the minister calling upon the persons chosen to be elders, they are to be interrogated concerning their orthodoxy, and to be taken solemnly engaged to adhere to and

\*See Edinb. ed. 1709. 4to. And also a Compendium of the Law of the Ch. of Scotland, vol. i. p. 194.



maintain the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church, and to lay themselves forth, by their office and example, to suppress vice, cherish piety, and exert discipline faithfully and diligently. Then the elders chosen, still standing up, the minister is next, by solemn prayer, to set them apart, *in verbis de presenti*. After prayer the minister is to exhort both elders and people to their respective duties.

"The duties of elders which are more public are those which lie upon them in the assemblies of the church, in which ruling elders have right to reason and vote in all matters coming before them, even as ministers have; for to general assemblies their commissions bear them to the same power with pastors. Howbeit, by the practice of our church, the execution of some decrees of the church doth belong to the pastors only; *such as the imposition of hands*, the pronouncing the sentences of excommunication and absolution, the receiving of penitents, the intimation of sentences and censures about ministers, and such like. In short, the elder is to speak nothing to the church from the pulpit."

In Title IX. of Moderators, it is said, "Seeing the moderator is frequently called to exercise the power of order, as solemn public ecclesiastic prayer, at least twice every session, to wit, at its first opening, and then at its closing, authoritative exhortation, rebuke, direction, it is convenient the moderator be always a minister."\*

In Title XII. of Presbyters, it is said, "The directory for government saith, that to perform any classical act of government or ordination, there shall be present at least a major part of the ministers of the whole *classis*."

That the views here given of the power of the ruling elders, is accordant to the uniform practice of the Church of Scotland, is proved by undeniable evidence. Calderwood asserts the fact that ruling elders did not lay on hands in his day, and adds, "Finally, though we should grant this act (the laying on of hands) to be a sacrament, and that the administrators of this sacrament are Pastor-presbyters only, still the others will not thereby be excluded from the Presbytery, (1 Tim. 4. 14,) because the laying on of hands does not belong to them; for the imposition of hands may be called "the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery," although each and every one of the Presbytery have not the power of imposing hands. It is enough that the leading part of the Presbytery have that power, just

\*Another reason is assigned in a very old Scotch work, "The Case of the Accommodation examined," p. 24. "Where the Session doth consist of one minister, both a preaching and a ruling elder, and the other elders of the congregation, who are but his helpers in discipline, his different quality, with the double honor allowed to him by the Apostle, doth abundantly determine the moderatorship in his favor."



as the tribe of Levi is said to offer incense, when it was the prerogative of the priest only."

The same fact which is ascertained by the *Altare Damascenum*, is also established in the *History of the Church of Scotland*, by the same illustrious author.\*

This matter is set at rest by the following communication, addressed to Dr. Miller, by one of the most accomplished antiquaries of the Church of Scotland, and which we take the liberty of transcribing, in order still more widely to give it circulation:

"The first question is, 'Did the Ruling Elders of the Church of Scotland, under the Second Book of Discipline, ever, in fact, lay on hands in the ordination of Pastors?' As the question refers to matter of fact, it is unnecessary to enter into any examination of the Second Book of Discipline itself, which, in my humble opinion, gives no countenance to the notion that Ruling Elders should lay on hands in ordination, any more than that they should preach the sermon, or offer up the ordination prayer. In point of fact, I do not remember any instance in which such a practice was observed under the Second Book of Discipline; and I have had frequent opportunities of examining, with this or similar objects in view, such works as Calderwood's *Larger History*; 'The Book of the Universal Kirk;' Scott's MSS. in the Advocate's Library, (in which he gives frequent notices of the election of Elders and Deacons, during both periods of the Reformation,) and the other documents of that period.

"But the best way of arriving at satisfaction on this point is by consulting the writings of our Reformers, who have treated expressly of the subject. The first authority I may cite is that of the celebrated Alexander Henderson, in the treatise which it is well ascertained was written by him, and published in the year 1641, two years before the Westminster Assembly sat down, entitled 'The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland.' In this treatise, which was written for the information of the English, and contains minute details of the practice observed at ordinations, he says, section ii., when speaking of the ordination of ministers—"The Minister cometh from the Pulpit, and, with as many of the Ministers present as may conveniently come near, lay their hands upon his head, and in the name of Jesus, do appoint him to be the pastor of that people.'

"In another treatise, by the well known Samuel Rutherford, entitled, 'A Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbytery in Scotland,' and published in 1642, the same fact is repeatedly brought out,

\*See *Altare Damascenum*, cap. xii. de administr. Laicis, p. 689, and in Dr. Miller, *Office of Ruling Elders*, p. 128.

and the practice defended on scriptural grounds, as well as the nature of the ministerial office. He says, 'Every where, in the word, where pastors and elders are created, there they are ordained by Pastors.' p. 37. 'Ordination of pastors is never given to people, or believers, or to Ruling Elders, but still to Pastors, as is clear from 1 Tim. 5: 22; Titus 1: 5; Acts 6: 6; Acts 13: 3; 2 Tim. 1: 6; 1 Tim. 4: 14.' p. 190. In this treatise Rutherford argues on the principle that if believers, who are not pastors, may ordain pastors, they may again depose and excommunicate, which, says he, 'are the highest acts of jurisdiction; and then may they preach and baptize, not being called ministers; then may the Sacraments be administrate, where there are no pastors, which is absurd, even to the separatists themselves.' p. 57.

"To these authorities I may be permitted to add that of James Guthrie, of Sterling, who, in his treatise of Elders and Deacons, observes—"Howbeit the execution of some decrees of the Church Assemblies, such as the imposition of hands—the pronouncing the sentence of excommunication—the receiving penitents—the intimation of the deposition of Ministers, and such like, do belong to *Ministers alone*.' Guthrie follows throughout the rules laid down in the first and second Books of Discipline. I am not aware that in the matter of ordination, there was the slightest variation made from the order of these books, after the Westminster Assembly, which affected the point in question."

We now come to the Westminster Assembly. Here the subject of ruling elders gave origin to "many a brave dispute for ten days." Besides the Independents, "sundrie," says Baillie,\* "of the ablest were flat against the institution of any such officer by divine right—such as Dr. Smith, Dr. Temple, Mr. Gataker, Mr. Vines, Mr. Price, Mr. Hall, and many more, beside the Independents, who truly spake much and exceedingly well. The most of the synod was in our opinion, and reasoned bravely for it; such as Mr. Seaman, Mr. Walker, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Newcomen, Mr. Young, Mr. Calamy. Sundry times Mr. Hendersone, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Gillespie, all three, spoke exceedingly well. When all were tired, it came to the question. There was no doubt but we would have carried it by far most voices; yet because the opposites were men very considerable, above all gracious and learned little Palmer, we agreed upon a committee to satisfy, if it were possible, the dissenters."

Again he adds,† "We have been in a pitiful labyrinth these twelve days, about Ruling Elders; we yet stick into it."

\*Baillie's Letters and Journals. Edinb. 1841. vol. ii. p. 110.

†Baillie's Letters and Journals, p. 115.

Again he says,†† “We have, after very many days’ debate, agreed, *nemine contradicente*, that beside ministers of the word, there is OTHER ECCLESIASTIC GOVERNOURS to join with the ministers of the word in the government of the church; that such are agreeable unto, and warranted by the word of God, especially the 12th Rom. 8; 1 Cor. 12: 28; that in the Jewish church, the Elders of the people did join in Ecclesiastic government with the Priests and Levites, according to 2 Chron. 19: 8. How many and how learned debates we had on these things, in twelve or thirteen sessions from nine to half-past two, it were long to relate.”

Again, speaking of Church Sessions, he says,\* “For our sessions, a great party in the Synod, for fear of Ruling Elders, and in opposition to Independencie, will have no ecclesiastic court at all, but one Presbyterie for all the congregations within its bounds.”

It is thus manifest that the Westminster Assembly could not unite in affirming the divine institution of the office of Ruling Elders, and that they did not regard them as referred to in the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17. In “the Grand Debate concerning Presbytery and Independency by the Assembly of Divines,† the language is “the ministers and ruling governors,” or “governing officers,”‡ and all that the Assembly could agree upon was, that “it is agreeable to, and warranted by the word of God, that some others besides the ministers of the word, or *church governors*, should join with the ministers in the government of the church.”§ Such is the uniform language of “The Form of Government” issued by this Assembly, as may be seen by a reference to it under the heads of “Officers of the Church,” “Other Church Governors,” “Of the Officers of a Particular Congregation,” “Of Classical Assemblies,” and throughout the whole work; and never on one occasion do they appropriate to such elders the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17, or call them by the name there supposed to be given to such officers, viz. *ruling elders*. “Even the accommodation,” observes Mr. Hetherington,\*\* “by means of which these propositions were framed and carried, was somewhat of a perilous experiment; for it narrowly missed introducing the unsound principle of admitting into the arrangements of the church what had no higher authority than considerations of expediency and prudence. For all were willing to have admitted the order of

††Baillie’s Letters and Journals, pp. 116, 117.

\*Baillie’s Letters and Journals. Edinb. 1841. vol. ii. p. 175.

†Our copy is in 3 vols. 4to, and contains the Papers for Accommodation and on other points.

‡See Papers of Accommodation, p. 5. Lond. 1648.

§This was proved by Rom. 12: 7, 8, and 1 Cor. 12: 28. See Hetherington’s Hist., p. 169, Eng. ed.

\*\*See Hetherington’s Hist., p. 169, Eng. ed.



ruling elders on these grounds ; but this was decidedly rejected, especially by the Scottish divines, and by those of the Puritans or English Presbyterians, who fully understood the nature of the controversy so long waged by their predecessors against admitting into a divine institution any thing of merely human invention."

On the 9th of January, 1644, the whole question of ordination was fairly stated by Dr. Temple, chairman of one of the committees, in the following series of interrogatory propositions: "1. What ordination is? 2. Whether necessarily to be continued? 3. Who to ordain? 4. What persons to be ordained, and how qualified? 5. The manner how?" To these were appended the following answers for the Assembly's consideration: 1. Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a person to some public office in the church. 2. It is necessarily to be continued in the church. 3. The apostles ordained, the evangelists did, preaching presbyters did; because apostles and evangelists are officers extraordinary, and not to continue in the church; and since, in Scripture, we find ordination in no other hands, we humbly conceive that the preaching presbyters are only to ordain."

These propositions gave rise to a long and learned debate, which is published in a quarto volume,\* and in which "the Dissenting Brethren," that is, the Independents, *affirmed*, and the Presbyterians *denied*, the following proposition:† "Where there is a sufficient presbytery, all and sole power in ordination may be assumed, though association may be had; but there may be a sufficient presbytery in a particular congregation."

"The discussion of this question," says Lightfoot, "had been managed with the most heat and confusion of any thing that had happened among us;" and to defeat the proposition of the Assembly, namely, "That no single congregation, which may conveniently join together in an association, may assume unto itself all and sole power of ordination," they mustered all their adherents; and when, therefore, it is now alleged by any that the power of ordination rests *in the eldership* OF A PARTICULAR CONGREGATION, and that ruling elders who are not ministers *may ordain*, we can be at no loss to perceive how perfectly they coincide with the Independents, and how openly they oppose the deliverance given by this Assembly, and by the universal testimony and practice of Presbyterian churches every where.

The urgency with which the Assembly presents their views on this point in their published "Form of Government," which is still in force in the Church of Scotland, and in all affiliated branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Ireland,

\*London. 1648.

†See Grand Debate, vol. i. p. 191, &c.



England, and America, is very remarkable. We have before us an original edition, printed in London. Under the head "Of Ordination of Ministers," it is said, "Every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong. 1 Tim. 5: 22, Acts 14: 23, and 13: 3."

Again, under the head, "Touching the power of Ordination," it is said, "Ordination is the act of a presbytery. 1 Tim. 4: 14." The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery, which, when it is over more congregations than one, whether those congregations be fixed or not fixed, in regard of officers or members, it is indifferent as to the point of ordination. 1 Tim. 4. 14.

"The preaching presbyters, orderly associated, either in cities or neighboring villages, are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain for those congregations within their bounds respectively."

Again, under the head of "The Doctrinal part of Ordination of Ministers," (§ 4,) it is declared, "Every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong. 1 Tim. 5: 22, Acts 14: 23, & 13: 3."

And in § 10, "Preaching presbyters, orderly associated in cities or neighboring villages, are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain, for those congregations within their bounds respectively. 1 Tim. 4: 17."

Again, in "The Directory for Ordination of Ministers," after describing the order of service, it is added, (§ 7,) "Which being mutually promised by the people, the presbytery, or the ministers sent from them for ordination, shall solemnly set him apart to the office and work of the ministry, by laying their hands on him, which is to be accompanied with a short prayer or blessing, to this effect."

Nay, so scrupulous were they on this point, that in the rules they drew up to meet the emergency of the times, and the demand for a speedy way of ordination, they require that no one shall be ordained but "by some, who being set apart themselves for the work of the ministry, have power to join in the setting apart of others, who are found fit and worthy."

Similar and as clear was the judgment of Calvin.\* "The imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers is confined to pastors alone." With these views concurs the explicit teaching of the Reformed churches of France, as appears from their governments and discipline.

On this point the learned antiquary, already quoted, says, "I am not aware of any Presbyterian body whose ruling elders

\*See Instit. lib. iv. c. iii. § 16.

are, or ever were, in the habit of imposing hands in the ordination of ministers. The subject, I understand, has been agitated in the Presbyterian Churches of England and Ireland; and Mr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, stated, in his late publication on the Eldership, that it is contemplated in the Irish Church, to set elders apart to their office in this way. But I do not recollect of ever hearing it mooted, in any quarter, to permit ruling elders to impose hands on ministers. The raising of such a question may be viewed in one respect as indicating the revival of a strong Presbyterian spirit, though somewhat in the *Puseyite direction*; while, in another respect, it appears to me inconsistent with Presbyteianism, and verging towards Independency."

Baxter offers five reasons why ruling elders should not ordain, and why preachers or pastors alone should exercise this function.\* Mr. Lazarus Seaman, who was a member of the Westminster Assembly, in his "Vindication," says,† "Of what consequence it is that ministers should keep up a peculiar interest of acting in the name of, and instead of Christ, by something peculiar to themselves."

He quotes Zanchius as saying,‡ "It matters not whether hands be laid on by all the ministers who are present, or by one in the name of the rest."

He also quotes the Leyden professors as saying, "Though the power of ordaining or confirming pastors (say they) belongs to the whole presbytery; yet of old the presbytery did execute that in the rite of laying on of hands, not so much by ruling elders as by pastors, who did especially attend on prophecy or explication of the Scripture, and application of it to the use of the faithful, *unde prophetia cum manum impositione perquam olim fiebat ordinatio pastorum, ab apostolo conjungitur*. 1 Tim. 4: 14. By this it appears they have a singular opinion of the word *prophecy*, not of the word *presbytery*; for they plainly suppose the presbytery consisted of two sorts of elders, and yet that PREACHING ELDERS ONLY LAID ON HANDS. And well they might suppose that, (as doth your author so often cited, p. 171,) because much of prayer and teaching is to accompany the act of imposition, before and after."

It will also be observed that the institution of ruling elders was opposed not only by the Independents, but by Dr. Temple, Dr. Smith, Mr. Gataker, Mr. Vines, Mr. Price, Mr. Hall, Mr. Lightfoot, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Palmer, and several others, who were not Independents.§ Baxter affirms that "the greater part

\*Disputations on Ch. Gov't. Lond. 1659. p. 265-267.

†Lond. 1647. 4 to. p. 67.

‡Ibid. p. 85.

§Hetherington, p. 168. Dr. Alexander's Hist. of, pp. 103, 217, 259.

if not three to one" of the English ministers denied the divine institution of this office, among whom he was himself a very bold and open champion.\*\* The Reformed churches of Hungary and Transylvania, while they regarded ruling elders as allowable, did not introduce them into their own polity.\* The French churches decided at the Synod of Charenton, in 1645,† "We agree the office of deacon is of divine appointment, and that it belongs to their office to receive, lay out, and distribute the church's stock to its proper use, by the direction of the pastor, and the brethren, if need be. And whereas divers are of opinion that there is also the office of ruling elders, who labor not in word and doctrine, and others think otherwise, we agree that this difference make no breach among us."

The Remonstrants‡ acknowledge only "bishops and elders," who, "by preaching the gospel, by teaching wholesome or saving truth, by confuting errors contrary thereunto; also by exhorting, comforting, reproving, correcting, ruling, and lastly, by going before others, by their example, &c., might preserve or keep together the churches already planted, and by a continual succession, to their utmost power, might propagate the same. And they ordained deacons, that after they had been first proved or tried, they might diligently employ themselves, in gathering and distributing alms, and in pious and tender care-taking of the poor in the said congregations."

From this review of the sentiments of the Reformed churches, it would appear that they universally admitted the right of the Christian laity to a participation in the government of the church, to elect their own ministers and officers, and to appoint rulers who might act as their representatives in carrying out the discipline and government of Christ's church. This was the case not only in the Presbyterian churches, but also in the Anglican church, which alone retained the prelatical form. The clear and full opinions of Dr. Whitaker, Archbishop Whitgift, Archbishop Cranmer, Dean Nowell in his authorized catechism, the approval given by Edward VI. and his clergy to the order of the French church formed in London by John A-Lasco, and also of Thorndike and Dr. John Edwards, have been given in their own words by Dr. Miller and others.§ And the reason why an office so approved by the English reformers and divines, was not adopted in its practice, is given by Bishop Burnet. He informs us that many learned

\*\*See Disput. on Ch. Gov't; Pref. p. 4, and 265-267; and Works, vol. i. p. 94.

\*Voetius, Polit. Eccl. tom. iii. p. 459.

†Quick's Syndicon, vol. i. p. 229, and vol. ii. p. 472.

‡Confession or Declaration of; Lond. 1676, pp. 225, 226.

§See on the Eldership, ch. iii. p. 42. See Eng. ed. ch. vi. p. 105; do. ch. vii. pp. 128, 133. See Jameson's Cyprianus Isotinus, ch. vi. p. 505, &c. See, also, Saravia on the Priesthood.



and pious divines, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, had observed the new models set up in Geneva and other places, for the censuring of scandalous persons, by mixed judicatories of ministers and laity; and these, reflecting on the great looseness of life which had been universally complained of in King Edward's time, thought such a platform might be an effectual way for keeping out a return of the like disorders. But certain wise politicians of that age demonstrated to the Queen that these models would certainly bring with them a great abatement of her prerogative; since, if the concerns of religion came into popular hands, there would be a power set up distinct from hers, over which she could have no authority."† And that this opinion still prevails in the English church we might prove from many sources. We quote, however, the opinion of Archbishop Whately.‡

It may be needful to add, that if in a church thus constituted, or in any other, the *laity* are admitted to a share in the government of it, and to ecclesiastical offices, this would be, not only allowable, but wise and right. That laymen—that is, those who hold no *spiritual* office—should take part in legislating for the church, and should hold *ecclesiastical* offices, as in the Scotch kirk, and in the American Episcopalian church, (always supposing, however, that they are MEMBERS of the church; not as in this country, belonging to other communions,) is far better than that the whole government should be in the hands of men of one profession, the clerical. That this has nothing of an *Erastian* character, it would be unnecessary to mention, but that I have seen the observation—in itself perfectly true—made in such a manner as to imply what is not true; i. e., so as to imply that some persons do, or may, maintain that there is something of Erastianism in such an arrangement. But who ever heard of any such charge being brought? Who, for instance, ever taxed the Scotch kirk, or the American Episcopalian, with being Erastian, on account of their having lay-elders? Erastianism has always been considered as consisting in making the *State*, as such—the civil *magistrate by virtue of his office*—prescribe to the people what they shall believe, and how worship God.

The Episcopal church in this country *at the time of its constitution* gave very emphatic proof of its adherence to this feature of primitive and reformed Presbyterian discipline, by adopting, *in some limited measure*, the sentiments of its

†Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, preface to the second volume of Nare's edition, pp. 24, 25.

‡See Kingdom of Christ, p. 285, Eng. ed. Dr. Hinds' opinion in his Hist. of the Rise and Progress of Christianity, has been already given. See, also, Christianity Independent of the Civil Gov't, p. 105. Spiritual Despotism, pp. 200, 205, 208, 210, 156, 199. See Eng. ed. Warburton's Alliance of Church and State, p. 197. Mem. of Prot. Ep. Ch. p. 79.



founder, Bishop White, and not those of Bishop Seabury, its first corrupter, and the first in the line of succession in the order of Puseyite high-churchmen. The introduction of the laity into all their councils, Bishop White urged on the following ground:\* From what he has read of primitive usage, he thinks it evident that in very early times, when every church, that is, the Christian people in every city and convenient district round it, was an ecclesiastical commonwealth, with all the necessary powers of self-government, the body of the people had a considerable share in its determinations. The same sanction which the people gave originally in a body, they might lawfully give by representation. In reference to very ancient practice, it would be an omission not to take notice of the council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts. That the people were concerned in the transactions of that body, is granted generally by Episcopalian divines. Something has been said, indeed, to distinguish between the authoritative act of the apostles, and the concurring act of the lay brethren; and Archbishop Potter, in support of this distinction, corrects the common translation, on the authority of some ancient manuscripts, reading (Acts 15: 23) "elders brethren," a similar expression, he thinks, to "men brethren," in chapter 2: 29, where the *and* is evidently an interpolation, to suit the idiom of the English language. It does not appear, that our best commentators, either before or since the time of Archbishop Potter, have followed his reading. Mills prefers, and Griesbach rejects it. The passage, even with the corrections, amounts to what is pleaded for—the obtaining of the consent of the laity—which must have accompanied the decree of Jerusalem, nothing less being included in the term "multitude," who are said to have "kept silence;" and in that of "the whole church," of whom, as well as of the apostles and elders, it is said, that "it pleased" them to institute the recorded mission. On no other principle than that here affirmed, can there be accounted for many particulars introduced in the apostolic epistles. The matters referred to are subjects, which, on the contrary supposition, were exclusively within the province of the clergy, and not to be acted on by the churches, to whom the epistles are respectively addressed." Bishop White's views are fully developed in his "Case of the Episcopal Churches considered," and to which in the above work and to the very end of life he expressed his unshaken adherence.† In this work he gives the outline of a form of government, evidently suggested by the form and order of our Presbyterian courts

\*Memoirs of the Prot. Ep. Ch. pp. 76, 77. On what grounds Bishop Seabury opposed it may be seen at p. 344, &c., of do.

†See Lectures on the Apost. Succ. pp. 41 and 412, and Mem. of Prot. Ep. Ch. p. 81.

with their clerical and lay delegates.† So that whatever popular representation is now enjoyed by this church, is literally and truly adopted from the Presbyterian church, which had been established long before it in this country.‡ By the veto, however, given to the bishop, and the vote by orders, which enables a majority of the clergy to outvote *all* the laity—the popular representation of the Episcopal church is but in name, and amounts to nothing in reality.

The fact is as plainly authenticated that all the Puritans from Cartwright downwards, and all the Independents until a recent date, agreed upon the same general principles, and had ruling elders in their churches.\*

†See ch. ii. and quotations given in the above.

‡See Presbytery and Prelacy, p. 538, &c.

\*See Dr. Miller, as above, where their Platforms and Confessions and standard writers are all quoted.

A large proportion, at least, of the first settlers of New England regarded the office of Ruling Elders as of Divine institution, and appealed to 1 Cor. 12: 28, and 1 Tim. 5: 17, as warranting this persuasion. The title of these officers is descriptive of their rank and work in the church. They were *Elders*, in common with the Pastor and Teacher: and as it was their duty to assist the teaching officers or officer in *ruling*, or conducting the spiritual affairs of the church, (in admitting, for instance, or excluding members, inspecting their lives and conversations, preventing or healing offences, visiting the sick, and administering occasionally a word of admonition or exhortation to the congregation,) they obtained the name of Ruling Elders. Whereas, Pastors and Teachers, by way of distinction, were sometimes called Teaching Elders, because it was eminently their duty to teach, or minister the word.

Ruling Elders were anciently ordained, (see Notes, Cambridge Ch.) and were sometimes addressed by the appellation of Reverend. In a letter, for instance, of Rev. Sol. Stoddard, communicating his acceptance of the call of the church at Northampton to be their pastor, the Ruling Elder, to whom it was addressed, was styled, the "Rev. John Strong," &c. The place of the Ruling Elders in the congregation was an elevated seat, between the Deacon's seat and the pulpit. They seem to have been more generally employed, and longer retained in the churches of New England, than teachers were, as distinct from Pastors. The Old South Church, Boston, for example, had never a Teacher, in the distinctive sense of the term; but at its foundation had its Ruling Elder, Mr. Rainsford, ordained at the same time with its first Pastor, Mr. Thacher. In the First Church, Boston, Ruling Elders were continued at least to the death of Elder Copp, in 1713; in York, Me., till the death of Elder Sewall, in 1769, and perhaps longer; in First Church, Ipswich, till after 1727; and in the Second Church of that town, Chebacco Parish, now Essex, till the death of Elder Crafts, in 1790. In Salem, the office was sustained for a great length of time; and can hardly be said to have yet become extinct. In the First Church in that city, which had Ruling Elders, at its foundation, in 1629, choice was made of one to fill that office in 1782. In the Third Church, there was an election to the same office, then recently vacated by death in 1783. And in the North Church, which had had Ruling Elders from its beginning, the late venerable Dr. Holyoke was appointed one in 1783, and Hon. Jacob Ashton in 1826.

In the county of Middlesex, eight churches appear to have had Ruling Elders; and of these eight, two afterwards removed beyond it. In the meeting-house, in South Reading, built about 1744, there was an Elder's seat, till removed in 1837; but it is not known to have been ever occupied by the appropriate officer. In August, 1630, the church of Charlestown, now First Church, Boston, chose Mr. Increase Nowell as its Ruling Elder, but he resigned in 1632, after he had been elected Secretary of the Colony—it being decided incompatible to hold both offices at the same time. In

While, however, all the Reformed churches did thus agree in justifying the concurrence of the people in the government of the church, they appear evidently to have abstained from any such title as would identify their representatives even in name, with the ministers of the word. Some distinctive appellation was therefore chosen, such as "assistants," which was the term in use among the English Puritans as late as the year 1606.\* And as the titles of bishop, pastor, and minister, came to be used as the official and regular names for preachers of the gospel, the word elder, as the translation of the Latin word *senior*, was appropriated to the representative of the people. But it was necessary to justify the office from Scripture, and

the present First Church, Charlestown, there was, according to Johnson, one Ruling Elder at the time he wrote, 1651. This was doubtless Elder Green, who kept the Church Records till his death, about 1658; and he seems to have had no successor in office. Elder Brown of Watertown Church, gathered in 1630; and Elder Goodwin of the Church gathered at Cambridge, 1633, and removed to Hartford, Ct., 1636, were both prominent characters in some of the theological questions and controversies of their day.

The present First Church, Cambridge, gathered in 1636, chose Ruling Elders at the beginning, and retained them above sixty years. The Ruling Elder of First Church, Concord, gathered in 1636, is noted for the "unhappy discord" which he occasioned in that church, and the trouble which he caused the teacher, Mr. Bulkeley, which may be the reason why, after the Elder's "abdication," no successor appears to have been appointed. In First Church, Newton, Thomas Wiswall, (styled in Cambridge Town Records, Rev. Thomas Wiswall,) was ordained a Ruling Elder in 1664, at the ordination of its first pastor. And finally, in the church at Hopkinson, gathered in 1724, two Ruling Elders were ordained in 1732. But in this church, it is believed, and in all the above churches in this county, the office has long been extinct. The following is a notice of the death of a Ruling Elder, who was probably the last to sustain the office in the church of Cambridge. "Lord's day, January 14, 1699-1700. Elder James Clarke of Cambridge dies; a good man in a good old age, and one of my first and best Cambridge friends. He quickly follows the great patron of Ruling Elders, Tho. Danforth, Esq.

Proposals were made in 1727, but without success, to revive the office of Ruling Elders in the Old South Church, Boston. "1727, March 31 ——— Propos'd to the Chh. to take it into yr Consideration whether the Scripture did not direct to the choice of Ruling Elders—nam'd yt. text, 1 Tim. v. 17. Ld. shew us yy mind and will in ys matter." A like attempt for the same purpose was made shortly after in the New Brick Church, now Second Church, Boston. "In 1735, after much debate, it was determined to have two Ruling Elders in the church; an office which has become almost obsolete, and which after this attempt to revive it, sunk for ever." . . . "This matter of the Ruling Elders was debated at numerous church meetings, from March 17, 1735, to November 11, 1737; at which time only one person (Deacon James Halsy) had been found to accept the office, and the church at last voted not to choose another."—*Am. Quarterly Register*.

\*About the year 1606, Mr. Bradshaw published a small treatise, entitled, "English Puritanism, containing the main opinions of the rigidest sort of those that went by that name in the realm of England," which Dr. Ames translated into Latin for the benefit of foreigners. As to government, this treatise says, "They hold that by God's ordinance the congregation should choose other officers as ASSISTANTS to the ministers in the government of the church, who are jointly, with the ministers, the overseers of the manners and conversation of all the congregation, and that these are to be chosen out of the gravest and most discreet members, who are also of some note in the world, and able, if possible, to maintain themselves."—*Neal*, vol. i. p. 434.



as the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17, appeared, when translated by the term *elders* instead of *presbyters*, to designate two kinds of elders, the term *ruling elder* came to be very generally used as an appropriate title for these assistants or seniors. Nor do we now object to the name, inasmuch as both the word *elder* and the word *ruling* are now understood only in their adopted and conventional meaning, and not in their Scriptural and derivative sense. The term *elder* is grave and honorable, and well suited to express the character and estimation in which its possessor should be held; while the epithet *ruling* as happily denotes the duty to which he is appointed. But when we refer to the passage *on which the name is founded*, and by which it is sustained, nothing could be more unfortunate than such an appropriation of its terms. For as we have seen, the one word *πρεσβυτεροι*, i. e. *presbyters*, is never used in the New Testament, or in the fathers, for any other officer than the one who might preach and administer sacraments; while the other term *προεστως* (*proestos*), i. e. *presiding*, alludes to an official duty in the public congregation, to which the ruling elder has never been deemed competent. And it is therefore our opinion that had this passage been rendered as it ought to be in accordance with the usage of Scripture—"Let the presbyters who preside" over fixed and organized churches, and minister to them in word and doctrine, "be counted worthy of double honor, but especially those presbyters who act as evangelists," in carrying that "word and doctrine" into frontier and destitute regions,—the use of the title "ruling elder" in its present sense, never would have been suggested, and all the confusion and obscurity which have been thrown around the question of the nature and duties of the office for ever prevented.



## CHAPTER V.

### On the permanency of the office of Ruling Elder.

The Parmasim, or lay senate in the synagogue, whose authority and office is, in some respects, similar to that of the session, hold their office but for one year, being annually chosen by the free voice of the people.\* The sidesmen and other lay representatives of the people in the ancient British churches, were also, as we have seen, temporary officers. Such also were they who were anciently admitted to sit in councils. And when the reformers revived and re-established the order of the church courts, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies, with lay representatives as competent members of them all, these officers were, in all cases, of a temporary character, and re-elected from year to year. Such was the case in Geneva,† and such continues to be the case in that church until the present time.‡ Such was the case also in Scotland during the continuance of the Book of Common Order, and the First Book of Discipline. The same plan was adopted by all the Reformed churches on the continent; in some cases the election of elders being annual, and in others for a longer period.§

This plan, however, has been disapproved by our own church, which has stamped the same perpetuity and sacredness upon the office of ruling elder which it attaches to the ministry. It pronounces it to be "perpetual, and not to be laid aside at pleasure," and that "no person can be divested of it but by deposition." Now against this arrangement we contend, and to this language also we object, and the order here laid down we believe to be inexpedient, and unscriptural in its character and injurious in its results.

This order is unscriptural. There is no warrant, either in Scripture precept, apostolic practice, or primitive usage, for such an arrangement. THE BRETHREN who sat in the council of Jerusalem, "the helps and the governments," and the lay-officers of the early churches, were, as far as we can gather from what is said in Scripture, and from the policy of the synagogue, temporary. Nor have we seen any thing in the history of the church to countenance the opposite opinion. A perpetual eldership is also contrary to the very principle upon which the Reformers based its authority, namely, the truth that

\*Bernard's Synagogue, p. 38.

†The Laws and Statutes of Geneva, p. 6.

‡Heugh's Religion in Geneva and Belgium, pp. 10, 11.

§Dr. Miller on the office of Ruling Elder, 1844, p. 118. De Moor's Comment. Perpet. tom. vi. p. 330, and Spanheim, *ibid*.

(as Luther words it) "ALL Christians belong to the spiritual state," and have an inherent and unalienable right to co-operate in the government of the church, and to hold ecclesiastical offices. The Christian laity, therefore, as God's "*clergy*," are to exercise their liberty, under a sense of responsibility to Christ, and in accordance with the rules of his word, in choosing their own pastors, and in electing and in appointing their own representatives. The church is a spiritual commonwealth, and all its officers, while their office, dignity, and rights are sacred by divine appointment, are chosen by the church, are responsible to the church, and may, and ought to be removable from office by the church, acting through its properly constituted organs. Especially and pre-eminently ought this to be the case with "ruling elders," which are, as our standards teach, "*properly* the representatives of the people, chosen by them." Now by attaching inviolability and permanency to the office, this character and object of the office is practically destroyed, since the great body of any church may, and often do live and die without having any opportunity to "choose representatives," and this too, even while they may feel very sensibly that they are misrepresented by the existing elders, and that the government and discipline of the church is altogether neglected or abused by them. The liberty and birthright of the Christian people are thus seriously curtailed, and their rights of spiritual citizenship practically abrogated and annulled. The republican and representative character of the church is in this way denied. The free, open, and popular design of our institutions, is also exchanged for a close corporation which cannot be changed, and which, at the same time, can perpetuate itself. Christian freemen, therefore, have a right from time to time to express their opinion in a Christian spirit, and under the direction of Christian rules, of their delegated representatives; and either to continue or to displace those who may have been found inefficient or unworthy.

But it may be said that these objections will apply equally to the ministers who, though elected by the people, are not removable by them, at pleasure. But we think differently. For, *practically*, the people *can* remove their minister and secure the services of one under whom they may be more benefited. And as ministers are not the officers of any one church, nor limited to any one territory, they can still continue in their office; and while objectionable to one particular church, still discharge the functions of the ministry to the spiritual benefit of others. But the ruling elder is the officer only of that church by which he has been elected, and he *is* fixed and permanent in his residence and location. And therefore, in his case there is a perfect contrast to the condition of the minister, since he is

necessitated to retain his office when no longer fit for it or acceptable in it, and, since the people are required to regard and treat as an elder the man who has no longer any claims on account of any duties he can render, (or it may be, he ever has rendered) to either their respect or their gratitude. This case, therefore, is perfectly anomalous and unreasonable.\*

And where, we again ask, does Scripture warrant the prelatistical notion that there is an inviolable and immutable sacredness, or *something*, attached to "*the office*" of a ruling elder apart from the *officer* himself?† What is the nature of this mysterious abstraction? Where does this invisible grace reside?—and *when*—*where*—and *how*—is it imparted? Where does Scripture teach us that a man may be incapable of holding an ecclesiastical office, and of discharging any of its duties, and yet that his office is nevertheless perpetual and cannot be laid aside? Surely we may search Scripture in vain for any such *quiddity* as this, which clothes its possessor with a secret charm and character, like our civil dignitaries of *Colonel* and of *General*, which the service of a single month may wreath around the brows of their honorable possessors for a long lifetime. Oh yes, we must go elsewhere among the misty and smoky closets of mediæval casuistry, to discover the true original source of this wonderful grace; and it ill becomes those who scout the whole assumption as the baseless fabric of a vision, and the concerted legend of monkish mysticism, to authenticate the truth of the dogma, and practically exhibit to the world such inexcusable inconsistency.

Nor is this arrangement less inexpedient than it is unscriptural. No man "can be divested of the office of elder but by deposition," and yet "he may become through age or infirmity incapable of discharging the duties of his office," and "from any other cause incapable of serving the church to edification!" Can such an arrangement as this be proper, becoming, edifying, or desirable? What is gained? We can see nothing but that indescribable and undiscernible *something* or *nothing* of which we have spoken. And what is hazarded and lost? Much, every way. The dignity and high character of the office is lost; for this consists not in any ecclesiastical appointment, but in the respect, confidence, and affection of the people. And how can they cherish such feelings towards those in whose election the great majority have had no choice; over whose continuance they have none of them any power or check or

\*The Reformed Churches of France, (see Form of Discipline, Can. xi. in Quick's Synodicon, vol. i. p. 19,) the ministry was declared to be for life, "*unless they be lawfully discharged upon good and certain conditions.*"

†When it was declared that ordination to ecclesiastical office "*imprimit characterem indelibilem,*" may be seen in Binus, tom. viii. p. 425, and Mourius De Sacris Eccl. Ordinibus, passim.



control; and whom they have not even the privilege of requesting from time to time to continue to render to them their duly estimated services? How poor is the encouragement, and how cheerless the reflections of a ruling elder who has no evidence of the free and hearty good will of his constituents, compared with the man who is urged to continue in his office from time to time by the approving votes of his respected brethren! The minister has this high, inspiring, and ennobling feeling, for he knows that by the continued kindness and reciprocated feelings of his people, he is useful and honored by them, and esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake; and when he perceives that it is otherwise, he can seek some other field, where God may open to him a wide and effectual door.

By our present arrangement, the motives to zeal and usefulness in the work of the eldership are, in a great degree, destroyed. The elected elder, being no longer directly responsible to the people, or dependent upon them for continuance in office, is led by all the evil tendencies of our corrupt nature, to fold his arms in indolence, to sit down and take his ease in Zion, and to do no more than his convenience or absolute necessity requires. We appeal to the state of our church sessions every where for illustrations of this melancholy truth, and we allege the very common (though thank God by no means universal) inefficiency and inactivity of the eldership, and their unwillingness to enter upon any field of self-denying Christian effort, as lamentable proof of the truth of our position. But were elders elected for a time, and made re-eligible to office, the office would at once rise in its practical interest and importance; the minds of the people would be more frequently directed towards it; and the minds of the elders more constantly directed towards the interests of the people, and thus be led, under the impulse of every high and stimulating principle, to be steadfast and immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

By the present arrangement we lose also the power of rectifying mistakes in judgment, and of removing from the office of the eldership men who have committed no crime which can be clearly proved against them, or even charged upon them, and who may be in the judgment of charity regarded as pious, and yet who have proved themselves unfit for the acceptable discharge of the office by their imprudence, their inert inefficiency, their want of gifts, their growing coldness and formality, their neglect of the Sabbath and week day services of the sanctuary, or from any other cause. As it now is, such men, and often too with the greatest tenacity, hang like millstones about the neck of a church; form prominent stumbling blocks in the way of sinners; and act like a drag upon the wheels of



the church, in every attempt at spiritual and benevolent enterprise.

By the present arrangement also we lose the services of many of the very best and most capable members of our church, who would, under an opposite arrangement, be found ready to enter upon the office of the eldership. As it is, they are so engrossed with necessary engagements, or so diffident and modest, or so affrighted by the prospect of a life of engagement, and by the mysterious awe which is made to surround the very character of "*the office*"—or so reluctant to enter into a *permanent* association with the existing members of the session, as to be unwilling to enter upon its discharge at all. The consequence is, that in some cases the least capable are the most certain to be inducted to this office, because they alone, perhaps, can be induced to accept of the office. And thus, it is sometimes seen, that the man who cannot or does not manage properly his own business, or his own family, and who is as unstable as water, is set up to manage the affairs of Christ's household, and to sit as a prince upon the throne of spiritual judgment. But were the office temporary, say biennial or triennial, the persons we have described could be induced to make trial of their gifts and of their fitness for the work, and if found acceptable and useful, be encouraged to continue their zealous and valuable services, and to lend their name, their character, and their example, to the moral influence and power of the session.

Neither can it be said that the corruptions of the Genevan, French, or any other Reformed churches, have resulted from the temporary nature of this office. There is nothing to warrant such an inference, any more than the inference of prelatists and Romanists from the same facts, against our doctrines and order generally. No! the evil in these churches lay in allowing these officers to be appointed by *the State*, and to be therefore men of whose protestantism and genuine piety there was no evidence either sought or given;—and from excluding them altogether from the supreme councils of the church. It was this *Erastian* character of the Reformed churches—their alliance with the State, their adaptation to the civil constitution, their consequent tendency to seek for worldly honor, respectability, and favor; their neglect to establish and enforce discipline altogether, or their procrastination until its effective administration became impossible,\* and the necessary withholdment and gradual corruption of the doctrines of the gospel—these were the true sources of this lamentable decay.

\*See a most affecting and learned exhibition of this truth by Comenius in his Exhortation to the Churches of Bohemia, and to the Churches of England. London, 1661, 4to.

And had the spiritual qualifications of their eldership been enforced, and their election retained in the hands of the members of the church; had they been admitted upon credible evidence of their piety, and the efficiency of church discipline been sustained; then, and in that case, we think the temporary character of the office would have given life, and zeal, and continued energy to the church.

## CHAPTER VI.

Of the Ordination of Ruling Elders by imposition of hands; and their coöperation in ordination.

The determination of both these questions depends in a great degree, as a matter of right and propriety, upon the questions already considered—and as the office of the eldership has been invariably regarded as temporary in its character until comparatively recent times, and still is so in the largest part of Reformed Christendom, and in the private judgment of a growing number even within those churches which have made it permanent,—the inference seems plain that the weight of opinion is against the propriety of ordaining them by imposition of hands. The fact therefore is, that they never have been so ordained except in this country, where the practice, though not sanctioned by our Standards, has been introduced by Dr. Miller, in accordance with his view of the nature and origin of the office. The same writer consulted by Dr. Miller, and already quoted, says:\* “On this point the evidence I think is equally clear that ruling elders were *not then*, and *never have been* set apart to their office by imposition of hands.” In a treatise formerly mentioned, Alexander Henderson, when treating of elders and deacons, says,—“When the day of their admission cometh, the pastor having framed his doctrine to the purpose, calleth them up and remembering both them of their duty in their charge, and the people of their submitting themselves unto them, they are solemnly received with lifted up hands, giving their promise to be faithful.” Mr. James Guthrie in his treatise says, “Their admission is to be by the minister of the congregation, or one appointed by the presbytery, in the presence of the whole congregation, with the preaching of the word,” &c. On this subject Dr. Miller himself is very candid. “And yet,” says he,† “nothing is more certain than that, since the Reformation from Popery, when the use of this office was almost universally revived, the mode of conducting its investiture by the imposition of hands *has been almost every where omitted*. When this formality began to be omitted, and for what reason, are questions for the solution of which we do not possess definite information. What the practice of the Waldenses, and other pious witnesses of the truth during the dark ages, who uniformly maintained the office of Ruling Elder, during all their hardships and persecu-

†Office of the Ruling Elder, p. 114.  
Gov't, p. 270, Quick's Synodicon, vol. i. p. 229.

\*Office of the Ruling Elder, p. 114.

tions, was, cannot now, so far as I know, be certainly determined." At what period in the history of the Church of Scotland it was that the annual election of elders was laid aside and the office made permanent, is not with absolute certainty known. The Rev. Mr. Lorimer, in his late valuable treatise on the Eldership in the Church of Scotland, supposes it to have been about the year 1642, a short time before the meeting of the Westminster Assembly. But so great was the force of habit, that notwithstanding this change in the tenure of the office, the old method of ordination has been continued in Scotland to this day, and was brought by our fathers to this country, where it continued without change until 1809, when *for the first time* it is believed, *in the Presbyterian world*, the practice of laying on hands in the ordination of elders was introduced, but has not yet become general in our church; and so far as the present writer knows, is entirely confined to the United States.

If, therefore, ruling elders never have been ordained by imposition of hands, and the tenure of the office has been so universally temporary, how can it enter into the heart of any man to conceive that they could properly impose hands in the ordination of ministers? This is one of Baxter's arguments: "And how came they," says he, "to have power to ordain others," as the Independents, against whom he reasons, alleged, "and are not ordained themselves, but are admitted upon bare election?"\* The evidence on this subject drawn from Scripture and the testimony of the fathers and reformers has been already given at length, and is, we think, sufficient to prove that they confined the terms bishop and presbyter, at least in their strict and official character as titles of office, to the pastor; and that they also *limited to them* the power of ordination as well as of preaching, administering sacraments, and presiding in the church and in its councils. We will only therefore add in this place one or two additional testimonies which have occurred to us in our reading.

Calderwood in his "Pastor and Prelate," published in 1628, says,† "The Pastor findeth it to be so far against the word of God to claim any authority over his brethren, that albeit there be a divine order in the Kirk, whereby there is one kind of ministry, both ordinary and extraordinary, in degree and dignity before another, as the apostle before all others, the pastor before the elder and deacon, yet he can find no minister, ordinary or extraordinary, that hath any majority of power over other inferior ministers of another kind,—as the pastor over

\*Dissert. on Ch. Gov't, p. 167.

†The First Part, §§ 6 and 8.



the elder and deacon, far less over other ministers of the same kind, as the pastor or bishop over the pastor.‡

"THE PASTOR with his fellow presbyters, as he is put in trust with the preaching of the word and ministration of the sacraments, HATH RECEIVED ALSO OF CHRIST THE POWER OF ORDINATION OF PASTORS, where presbytery,§ never used in the New Testament to signify the office of priesthood or order of a presbyter, can be no other thing but the persons or company of pastors laying on their hands, and that not only for consent, but for consecration, of which number any one may pronounce the words of blessing. We will now introduce a quotation which will be at the same time an argument. It is from that celebrated work, "*Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*," written by "the Provincial Assembly of London" in the year 1654, and directed principally against the Independents. They ask,\* "What part hath the Ruling Elder in ordination? Supposing that there is such an officer in the church, (for the proof of which we refer the reader to our vindication,) we answer that the power of *ordering* of the whole work of ordination belongs to the whole presbytery, that is, to the teaching and ruling Elders. But imposition of hands is to be always by preaching presbyters, and the rather because it is accompanied with prayer and exhortation, both before, in, and after, which is the proper work of the teaching Elder;" and in Part Second they argue this question still more at length.†

We might multiply quotations, but cannot avoid presenting one other. It is from a very curious and able work by the Rev. Thomas Ball, "sometime fellow of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, now minister of the gospel in Northampton, at the request and by the advice of very many of his neighbor ministers," entitled "*Pastorum Propugnaculum, or the Pulpit's Patronage against the force of unordained usurpation and invasion*," printed at London in 1656. After discussing at length the nature of ordination, and who should administer it, he adds,‡ "They should be 'head officers;' Paul was a head officer, yet hath a hand in Timothy's ordination, as we have showed before. The lowest that we read of were prophets and teach-

‡By Scripture, no apostle hath power over another apostle, nor evangelist over another evangelist, nor elder over another elder, nor deacon over another deacon; but all are equal.

§1 Tim. 4: 14. Neither doth the apostle deny that to presbyters which he did himself with them, and which he ascribeth to Timothy. 1 Tim. 5: 22. 2 Tim. 1: 6. Neither the prelate himself denieth the power of ordination to the presbyter, but the exercise of the power which he arrogateth to himself. *Ordinat. Deus per ecclesiam, ordinat, ecclesia per presbyterium per episcopos, et pastores suos; singuli conferunt in unum quae sua sunt.*—Jun. animad. 1187.

\*Part I. p. 182.

†Part II. pp. 96-98.

‡Lond. 4to. pp. 344. See p. 234, 235.

ers in the church at Antioch; in that Presbytery that Paul speaks of, it is very like there were Apostles; for Peter, none of the meanest, thinks not himself too good to be a Presbyter—'The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder'—that is, a Presbyter, and it is no wonder that the highest did attend it, for it is the highest work, a consecrating or devoting one unto the highest honor and employment in the church, the matching and espousing one to Jesus Christ, the putting of one's hand unto the plow, from which he never must look back again; that there are orders and degrees of officers appears, because the well using of the office of a deacon was to procure to himself a good degree or step unto another place, as the Apostle speaks; and the Apostles were the first or highest order or degree, as appears from that enumeration that is set down, yet they think not themselves too good to ordain the meanest officer, for so the deacons always were accounted, and that in a busy time, when they had renounced secular employments, as below them, and confined themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. So Paul and Barnabas were the great apostles of the Gentiles, yet thought it not enough to preach the Gospel and convert men to the truth, but did also carefully ordain them elders in every church; good people therefore must not think much to leave *this unto preaching elders that was never practised by any of God's people, either in the Scripture or after ages of the church*, and which is really above their sphere, even a great deal more than they can manage, or tell how to wield, and be content those should perform it, that are by God deputed thereunto."

Thus much we have added on this question in this place, by way of supplement to the previous discussion, in which it is more fully considered. If in Scripture and the Fathers the terms presbyter and bishop are limited in their official sense to preachers, and if such alone united in the act of ordination, as has we think been made apparent, then, of course, there can be no question as to the right of ruling elders to *ordain*. And if the practice of reformed churches, including our own, have been invariably opposed to such a practice, there can be as little question as to the *expediency or propriety* of introducing such an innovation into the order of our church. We cannot therefore but hope that a question so fruitless and unprofitable will be allowed to rest, and that the energies of the church will be devoted to the upbuilding of her waste places and the extension of the kingdom of Christ.\*

\*Brown in his *Vindication of the Presbyterian Form of Church Gov't*, Edinb. 1812, 2d ed., occupies from p. 64 to p. 66, and again at pp. 188, 169, in proving that "ministers alone can ordain ministers," and he shows that this was admitted by many Independents.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Value of the Eldership.

It may be profitable before bringing this work to a close to illustrate the value of the Eldership.

There are two dangerous extremes, between which, as some destructive Scylla and Charybdis, the church of God has pursued her hazardous and oftentimes fatal course. To these we will first advert.

The first of these extremes is the undue exaltation and power of the Christian ministry, which leads to spiritual despotism, and terminates in consequent corruption.

The love of power and domination is one of the most strongly manifested principles of man's fallen nature, and stands out most prominently in the blood-stained history of our apostate race. Equally certain is it that those elements in human nature which constitute man a religious being, and which bind him over to the unalterable destinies of a future and unseen world, are the most sure and effectual means by which such spiritual power can be established and upheld. Hence it is that the chief influence and sway over the minds and consciences of men has ever been exerted by the priesthood. And just as the character of religious teachers has been pure, elevated, and noble, or corrupt and debased, has their power been found to work out the degradation or the welfare of society.

The teaching of the doctrines, and the administration of the ordinances and discipline of the Christian church have been intrusted, by its divine Head, to an order of men who constitute the ministers of the sanctuary. And, while human sagacity and care must ever be insufficient to prevent the entrance of unholy and unworthy persons into this sacred office, it is also certain that even in those who are truly Christian the natural love of power may exert its influence, under the assumed pretext of a just and necessary zeal for the honor and glory of God. From both these causes it was early found that the Christian ministry, at least to some considerable extent, arrogated to itself an undue authority in the church; claimed the possession of all heavenly gifts, so as that these could not be received except through their hands; and separated the clergy from the laity by a high wall of mysterious sanctity; until at length the laity were excluded from all interference with ecclesiastical arrangements, and were taught to look with implicit faith and reverence to these spiritual depositories of heavenly grace, for all saving and divine communications.

Such an exclusive management of the whole business of the church would, of course, insensibly lead its ministers to introduce rites, ceremonies, and doctrines adapted to secure the establishment of these spiritual claims. For this purpose it was taught that the gifts and graces of God were vested as a sacred deposit in the ministry, and were only to be obtained through their instrumentality. For this purpose were the people made to believe that sins committed after baptism were scarcely, if at all, remissible, and that when remitted it was only through the penances prescribed by these priestly mediators. For this purpose was the cup withheld from the laity, and the Lord's Supper changed into the idolatrous service of the mass. For this purpose were auricular confession, pilgrimages, indulgences, consecration of places and of utensils, and all the other forms, rites, and ceremonies, which have been from time to time adopted, made of primary and indispensable importance. By these and similar methods was the ministry exalted and the laity humbled; the form clothed with the prerogatives of God, and the latter despoiled of the rights and immunities secured to them by Christ. Spiritual despotism being thus established, the corruption of the entire system of the gospel was a necessary and unavoidable consequence, since in its purity it asserts the liberty of its disciples, emancipates them from the yoke of servility to their fellow men, and introduces them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Now this system of iniquity yet works, and the principles which lead to it are, and ever will be, common to every inheritor of our fallen humanity. Christian ministers now are, by nature, what they ever were and ever must be, weak, erring, sinful, and fallible mortals. The *tendency* of this corrupt nature would of itself lead them to the assumption of undue power, and of unauthorized prerogatives, and to the consequent perversion to their own carnal purposes and professional aggrandizement, of the oracles of God.

How admirable, therefore, is the wisdom of God in providing a counteracting agency in the people, and in their delegated representatives, the Christian Eldership, by which the approaches of this spiritual tyranny may be checked, and the first inroad of heresy stayed. These are representatives of *the people*, chosen and delegated by *the people*, and not by the ministry. Ruling elders are in constant and familiar intercourse with the people. They are, or ought to be, numerous. They are independent of the clergy. They can carry an appeal from their decisions to all the appointed judicatories of the church. And thus, if they are in any good measure faithful men, they may effectually guard *the members* of the church from the possibility of all ecclesiastical tyranny; and *the doctrines* of the



church from all ecclesiastical perversion by a wily, selfish, ambitious, unconverted, or heretical clergy.

"Wherefore," says Hilary or Ambrose, in the Commentary usually attributed to him, (on 1 Tim. 5: 1,) "both the synagogue and afterwards the church had seniors, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which order, by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not, unless perhaps by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the teachers, while they alone wish to appear something." Nothing, therefore, has been more violently resented by High Church prelatists of every age than this interference of the laity with what they arrogantly claim as their sole and exclusive jurisdiction. The eldership has consequently been declaimed against as an "inquisitorial court not to be endured,"\* and at this very moment is it boldly declared by the divines of Oxford that the admission of the laity in any form into the ecclesiastical assemblies of the American Episcopal church, is a manifest usurpation which must be overthrown.†

In the early ages of the church the right of the people to a participation in the government of the church was, as we have seen, never questioned. They voted for their pastors even as they do in Presbyterian churches now, and were summoned together whenever the election of a Bishop became necessary.‡ Thus in the year A. D. 448, as Bede informs us, Germanus and Lupus were sent from France into England to suppress the Pelagian heresy. A synod or council was summoned at Verulam, (St. Albans,) in which the people, the laity as well as the clergy, had decisive votes in determining points of doctrine.§ "The ancient method," says Burns, "was not only for the clergy but the body of the people within such a district to appear at synods, of whom a certain number were selected to give information, while four, six, or eight delegates, according to the extent of the parish, represented the rest, and sat with the clergy as testes synodales."\*\*

It was from a conviction of these truths, and from a belief that such officers were absolutely necessary to withstand those excesses of tyranny practised by the Romish clergy at and before the period of the Reformation, that Calvin in 1542 revived these rules in the Christian church at Geneva, as they had been already elsewhere.††

Since then it appears that when the usurping power of pre-

\*Whitgift's Defence, Soames, Eliz. Rel. Hist.

†See British Critic, as fully quoted in my Lectures on the Apost. Succes. pp. 309-312.

‡See Clarkson's Primitive Episcopacy.

§Eccl. Hist. lib. i. c. 17, in Bib. Repert. 1837, p. 15.

\*\*Burns' Eccl. Law, vol. i., p. 408.

††See Brown on Ch. Gov't, p. 126.

latical ambition ruled over God's heritage, this office, which gave an interposing authority to the people, was discontinued; and that when the church was roused by the Spirit of God to throw off that spiritual despotism, she found it necessary to summon to her aid these divinely authorized officers; and since the same tendency to undue and arbitrary authority is *native* to corrupt humanity, and will therefore ever manifest itself, the value and importance to be attached to the office of the Christian Eldership must be at once apparent.

Such has ever been its influence in the reformed Kirk of Scotland; so that when the Book of Canons was sent to Scotland in 1635, by authority of King Charles, but in reality through the influence of Archbishop Laud, it constituted one chief item in the list of grievances against which the nation boldly protested, that thereby "lay-elders were rejected."\* And it will be manifest to every attentive reader of the history of the Church of Scotland, that both at the period of her first and second reformation, it was only by the bold, uncompromising, and steadfast adherence to the cause of covenanted truth, by the representatives of the laity, the cause of reform was maintained against the combined power of Erastian plunderers and Romish plotters; and that but for their resolute and persevering stand, the cause of Presbyterianism would have been in some cases sold into the hands of powerful rulers.†

To the elders, in connexion with the pastor, is committed the authoritative administration of the discipline of the church, both as a preservative against error, and also against immorality; and the purity or impurity, the prosperity or adversity of the church since the Reformation will be found to coincide with the degree of their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the exercise of this double spiritual power.

When General and Provincial Assemblies were suppressed in Scotland, and presbyteries neglected, ministers became negligent, immorality and heresy prevailed, and Popery increased.‡ And the present lamentable condition of the church in Germany, where infidel and unchristian tenets have been substituted for the pure word of God, is also traceable to the deficient constitutions of the German churches, their entire want of control over the opinions of their own ministers, and their wild licentious exercise of the right of private judgment on every question, however mysterious and momentous.§ These evils have been so strongly felt, and their cause so clearly discerned, that measures are in progress for the establishment of a more efficient church government and discipline. Not

\*See Life of Henderson by Dr. Aiton.

†See do. do. pp. 311, 312, 317, 322, &c.

‡Ibid, p. 157.

§See Rose on, in Bib. Repert. 1826, pp. 405 and 449.

only is this true of the continental church generally—it is most lamentably exemplified in the church in Geneva, where the worldly character of the elders, and their exclusion from the highest ecclesiastical court, which is composed of clergymen merely, have enabled unprincipled men gradually and most insidiously to supplant with Socinian formularies all the existing standards of the church.†

So, also, in England, the lax discipline, and the imperfect constitution of the Old Presbyterian churches (for Presbyterianism never was fully carried out in that country, and therefore never could exert its full efficiency) gave occasion to the corruption of doctrine and the degeneracy of piety.

“It is of the very greatest importance,” says the Rev. Mr. Thomson, in the *Scottish Christian Herald*, “to ascertain the causes of this remarkable and deplorable decline of Presbyterianism. The grinding persecutions to which Presbyterians were subjected by Cromwell, an Independent, and by the faithless Episcopalians, under the Stuarts, prevented them from erecting the platform of their scriptural polity, and familiarized many to the more attainable, plastic, and accommodating institutions of Congregationalism.

“Presbyterians began to look upon forms of church government as not of Divine institution; they regarded them as merely human expedients for the preservation of order; and that, therefore, a church might be just as rightly constituted under one form as under another; they talked, indeed, of Episcopalianism’s being adapted to rich and gorgeous England, and of Presbyterianism’s being adapted to poor and homely Scotland. The necessary consequence of this miserable delusion was, that the strictness of discipline gave way; Presbyterianism came to be branded as stiff, rigid, puritanical and unaccommodating; and numbers of the churches lapsed into Independency, and thence sank into Socinianism. By many churches which did not go the whole length of this declension, alliances and agreements were entered into with Congregationalists, which but opened a door for admission into the congregations of the more acceptable doctrines of the latter, who broke the pactions as soon as they saw that this purpose had been sufficiently served. Seldom were pains taken any where to instruct the people in the counsel of God, respecting the form and government of the church. Every thing relating to such matters was rather, indeed, studiously kept out of sight. The result was inevitable—the people became ignorant of the subject, and as indifferent to it as they were ignorant of it. The consequence was, that the framework of Presbyterianism was, in many places, gradually and utterly dissolved; and congregation after

†See Dr. Heugh’s *Religion in Geneva and Belgium*.



congregation passed into other communions without even an effort being made to retain them."

Seeing, therefore, that if true doctrine and true piety are left to the care and preservation of the clergy *merely*, they will as certainly be in time corrupted;\* and that under God the life of the church is maintained by a faithful discipline and control; the importance of a Christian eldership, who shall act as overseers of the flock, and as helps and governments, cannot be too highly estimated. They are guardians of the spiritual liberties and the religious freedom of the people. They are set for the defence and preservation of the truth, not by its inculcation from the sacred desk, but by the preservation of that desk itself from the intrusion of erroneous and unsound teachers.†

"That there has never been any open and avowed departure from Calvinistic doctrines in the Presbyterian church in the United States," says Dr. Hodge in his Constitutional History, "while repeated and extended defections have occurred in New England, is a fact worthy of special consideration. The cause of this remarkable difference in the history of these two portions of the church, may be sought by different persons in different circumstances. Presbyterians may be excused if they regard their form of government as one of the most important of those causes. New England has enjoyed greater religious advantages than any other portion of our country. It was settled by educated and devoted men. Its population was homogeneous and compact. The people were almost all of the same religious persuasion. The Presbyterian church, on the contrary, has labored under great disadvantages. Its members were scattered here and there, in the midst of other denominations. Its congregations were widely separated, and, owing to the sparseness of the people, often very feeble; and, moreover, not unfrequently composed of discordant materials, Irish, Scotch, German, French, and English. Yet doctrinal purity has been preserved to a far greater extent in the latter denomination than in the former. What is the reason? Is it not to be sought in the conservative influence of Presbyterianism? The distinguished advantages possessed by New England, have produced their legitimate effects. It would be not less strange than lamentable, had the institutions, instructions, and example of the pious founders of New England been of no benefit to their descendants. It is to these sources that portion of our country is indebted for its general superiority. The obvious

\*That heresies have generally originated with aspiring clergymen, see Faber's *Albigenses*, p. 567. And that they have generally been opposed to all reformation of abuses, see Conder's *View of all Religions*, p. 78; Neals' *Hist.*, vol. iv., p. vii., 429; Burnet's *Hist. of Ref.*, vol. i., p. xvi., xxi.

†On the Influence of Elders and the Laity, in checking error, see *Bib. Repertory*, 1837, p. 15, 17.



decline in the religious character of the people, and the extensive prevalence, at different periods, of fanaticism and Antinomianism, Arminianism and Pelagianism, is, as we believe, to be mainly attributed to an unhappy and unscriptural ecclesiastical organization. Had New England, with her compact and homogenous population, and all her other advantages, enjoyed the benefit of a regular Presbyterian government in the church, it would, in all human probability, have been the finest ecclesiastical community in the world.

"It is well known that a great majority of all the distinguished ministers whom New England has produced, have entertained the opinion here expressed on the subject. President Edwards, for example, in a letter to Mr. Erskine, said, 'I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things.' Life, p. 412. Where the preservation of the purity of the church is committed to the mass of the people, who, as a general rule, are incompetent to judge in doctrinal matters, and who, in many cases, are little under the influence of true religion, we need not wonder that corruption should from time to time prevail. As Christ has appointed presbyters to rule in the church according to his word, on them devolve the duty and responsibility of maintaining the truth. This charge is safest in the hands of those to whom Christ has assigned it."

But there is also another extreme to which the church may be driven, and which is followed by consequences equally dangerous and destructive, and that is the undue influence and interference of the people. There may be a spiritual democracy as well as a spiritual despotism—a spiritual anarchy and wild misrule, as well as an arbitrary exercise of spiritual and ministerial authority. For if ministers, with all their knowledge, their motives to piety, and their solemn obligations to preserve and perpetuate the truth, are often found insufficient to withstand the temptations to self-aggrandizement, how much less are the mass of any congregation or church qualified for the exercise of power and the discernment of truth? The *many* will always be guided by the *few*, and will implicitly follow their direction; while these will be swayed in their determinations by party spirit, prejudice, or personal animosity. When all are judges and rulers, and all have equal voice and authority, tyranny and misrule must necessarily, in the very nature of things, be the result.

The principle of representation on which the power of government and control is delegated by the many to the few, is therefore found to be of essential importance in all social and

political bodies. The ultimate power being in the mass, its present exercise is committed to appointed officers.

Now this principle God has sanctioned in the church, where all authority and power, though vested not in the people generally, is to be exercised by officers chosen by, and from among, the people. An order of ministers, also, are empowered with the exclusive office and authority of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments, ordained by previously existing ministers, and then elected by the people. And as salvation is made to depend upon the preaching and hearing of the truth; and since the power of the truth depends upon the purity and fidelity with which it is proclaimed, it is clearly as necessary that the ministry should be upheld and maintained in the exercise of all proper independence and authority, that it may be under no overbearing influence through fear of the hatred, or desire of the favor of the people, as that the rights of the people should be guarded against the encroachments of spiritual tyranny. All order, discipline, and jurisdiction are as likely to be overthrown, and the truth of God as likely to be perverted and made to adapt itself to the taste of man, where they are subject to the domineering caprices of the multitude, as when left to the exclusive management of a single individual.\*

The Christian eldership, therefore, is of great value and importance, when viewed as the guardian of the just rights and necessary authority of the ministry, and as a check to the capricious and unauthorized interference of the people, or of any aspiring individuals among the people. Anarchy and wild misrule are as dangerous as despotism; and the way of safety lies in that happy medium which preserves authority within its just and proper limits, and secures obedience to all the rightful demands of lawful officers. The eldership is thus the balance-weight between the ministry and the people, by which they are kept in a happy equilibrium; appointed by the people, and yet acting with the pastor; representatives of the people, but bound over to solemn fidelity to all the interests of the church; and numerous, that they may the better supply all the necessities which demand their care, and the better guard against whatever influence might be exerted to introduce disorder or corruption into the bosom of the church.

"Presbyterianism," says the author already quoted, "though, no doubt, adapted to human nature, as every Divine institution unquestionably must be, is yet not a form of church government which men will naturally choose. It is adapted to reform, not to please human nature. There is in it both too

\*As illustrative of the anarchy which must result from the exercise of spiritual powers by the people, see Div. Right of Ch. Gov't, pp. 111 and 114.

much and too little of governmental character, too much and too little of distinction of order, too much of ruling required, and yet too little power conferred upon the rulers, ever to render it generally, much less universally, palatable. Those who love power will naturally prefer prelacy. Presbyterianism, by placing all the pastors of the church on the same level, and by forbidding them to be lords, in any sense, over God's heritage, affords no scope to clerical pride or ambition on the one hand, or to the indulgence of a servile, inert, implicitly confiding submission on the other. By associating churches, and placing the government of them, not in the hands of one individual, but in a body corporate, composed not of ministers exclusively, but of ministers and elders in equal proportions, and with equal gubernatorial authority, not of a legislative, but only of a ministerial nature, Presbyterianism stands opposed to despotism, whether it be despotism over a diocese, or despotism over a congregation, the despotism of ministers over their people, or of people over their ministers. Men generally may love power and liberty in the things of this present world, but the greater part are heartily content that others both think and act for them in matters relating to religion and the world to come. All such persons will prefer, as circumstances may modify their taste, either Papal, Diocesan, or Congregational, to Presbyterian Episcopacy. Presbyterianism will not permit a minister, how strong soever his desire or great his ability to rule over a congregation, to do so; neither will it allow such of the people as may be disposed, to rule over the minister. It scripturally subordinates the minister to his ministerial brethren, and the people to those who have the rule over them in the Lord; and thus, how much soever it may be adapted to the condition, it certainly is not palatable to the wishes of fallen humanity. Presbyterianism is part and parcel of the Cross, and must, in part, partake of the offence of the Cross."

"The elders," says Dr. Aiton, in his *Life of Henderson*, "than whom there does not exist a more pious and kind-hearted class of men, have ever strengthened the hand and often encouraged the heart of their minister. As a connecting link between a minister and his people, they soften asperities, correct prejudices, and possess opportunities of explaining and justifying or palliating his conduct in many instances, where the injury could neither have been otherwise found out or counteracted. In the little priory council-meetings at the manse, their discretion, accompanied with modest sincerity, often corrects a want of knowledge of character on the part of the newly inducted moderator. A minister, therefore, without elders in his session, is as much to be pitied as a man without friends; and he is no more fit for the efficient discharge of his parochial



duties, than any artisan deprived of the right arm is for his trade. In the presbytery, elders give unity and vigor to our deliberations, promote impartiality of judgment, deaden jealousy among the members, and, above all, give the church a hold on public opinion. In the General Assembly, now the only remnant of Scottish independence, the introduction of lay elders has been attended with the happiest effects. The finest talents usually exercised in secular concerns, are there every day called into requisition, to advance the well-being of the church."

But we must pass on to notice another danger to which the Christian church is exposed, and that is, the tendency to make religion a ministerial and not a personal concern. This is a deep-seated principle of our depraved nature. In our alienation from God, our enmity to him, and our utter indisposition to spiritual things, we are very willing to resign to others the burden of an active and devoted piety. We are very glad to be religious by proxy, and to gratify our selfish love of ease by shifting away from us the obligations of a holy and heavenly zeal. We are full glad to witness whatever amount of consecrated piety ministers may exhibit, if the people are only left undisturbed in the pursuit of their farms, their wealth, or their merchandise. Now this whole spirit is of the flesh; it is carnal; it is earthly; it is anti-Christian. It is the voice of the old man pleading for his old and inveterate habits. It is that love of our own selves and of the world which are in their habitual indulgence wholly irreconcilable with the love of God, of Christ, and of the gospel. This spirit must be expelled, or the church will be possessed as by legions of evil spirits. It must be utterly exterminated, or the cold stupor of spiritual death will paralyze its energies.

And what, under God, is better adapted to bring home to the conscience of every Christian the imperative necessity of such Christian activity and devotedness, than the claim which is made by God himself to the services of a Christian eldership, chosen from among themselves, and the example which is thus given to every member of the flock, of the practicability and the duty of serving the Lord while diligent in business; and of giving a punctual and faithful attention to all the demands of earthly and relative obligations, while at the same time they present as a consecrated offering to God the living sacrifice of the body, soul and spirit, to the promotion of His glory in the salvation of men? There is in a holy and devoted eldership a living witness to these just claims of heaven; a visible demonstration of the duty of every Christian; an open exposure of the baseless hypocrisy and groundliness of those excuses by which too many professors of religion shield themselves from the just demand of charity and piety; and an undeniable proof



that it is the "reasonable service" of all who profess to be followers of Christ, while diligent in worldly business, to be at the same time fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and to live not to themselves, or for any temporal interests, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.

Finally, let us exhibit the value and importance of the eldership, by considering how admirably the church courts, which they unite in forming, meet the wants of active and efficient Boards or Agencies by which the operations of benevolence may be carried on, and the church aided in all her Christian and evangelical efforts.

It is very remarkable that the Independent churches in England, who have thus far been acting altogether upon the principle of voluntary combination in carrying forward their missionary and other labors, are now led to acknowledge the necessity of some such ecclesiastical arrangement as we possess. "We lay it down," says Dr. Campbell, the author of the Prize Essay on Lay Agency, "as a fundamental principle, that all evangelical movements, in order to success and permanence, so far as practicable, ought to be congregational as opposed to general and conventional."§ "Our object," he says, "is to carry this all important principle of congregational operation into every department of Christian agency, and to show that every congregational church is an organized body, capable of performing and designed to perform all manner of evangelical functions, necessary to the spread of the gospel and the salvation of men." Such a church, therefore, "is a system, a compound society, branching forth in every direction where work is to be performed in behalf of religious benevolence. There is not one of those various objects appertaining to the local diffusion of Christian knowledge for which separate societies have been formed, which might not have been far more easily, cheaply, and effectively accomplished by the churches of Christ acting in their individual, organized capacity. Whether those objects relate to Sabbath School instruction—to the farther cultivation of young people of both sexes—to Bible and tract distribution—to district visitation of the poor, in towns and cities, for Scripture reading and exposition—to cottage lecturing and village preaching—or to any other pursuits of a like nature, they can be effectively prosecuted only upon one principle, the principle of congregational operation."\*

The same principle is very fully and ably discussed by the Rev. W. H. Stowell, President of Rotherham College, in "The Missionary Church, designed to show that the spread of the Gospel is the proper business of the Church as the Church."†

§Eclectic Rev. Dec. 1839, p. 669.

\*See Jethro, or A System of Lay Agency, Lond. 1839, pp. 186, 187.

†Lond. 1840, 2d edition.

Now this is just the system which is already perfectly arranged in the scheme of Presbyterianism, and which is now in full operation in the conduct of our various benevolent enterprises. Every church is a regularly organized Christian society for the great object of glorifying God in the salvation of men. Of this society the church session is the board of managers, and should take effectual means to carry on within each church all the benevolent operations of the church. Each church again is auxiliary to that Presbytery within whose bounds it lies, and whose duty it is to guide, stimulate, concentrate and govern the separate efforts of each individual church. So again each Presbytery is auxiliary to the Synod, and each Synod to the General Assembly, which gives unity, energy and efficiency to the combined efforts of the whole church.

Now were elders what they might and ought to be, it is at once apparent that every church in our whole denomination would be found in readiness to every good work. No agencies would be needful to advise them of their duty, or rouse the slumbering efforts of churches already acquainted with their duty, and make them forward in the work and labor of love. Certainly, economy, and efficiency would soon characterize all the philanthropic and Christian enterprises of the Presbyterian church; and however others might slacken in their zeal, she would be found going on from strength to strength in all holy devotedness to God.

But we must close. And in doing so we would invite attention to the following eloquent delineation of the value and importance of the eldership to the church of Scotland formerly, and of the power it may still exert for the diffusion of Christian influences throughout any land. It is from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Guthrie.

"In our ancestors," he says, "wisdom was justified of her children: and they considered a charge of a thousand people ample enough for any man to manage. Nor did they leave the minister alone to manage it. No more than the captain of a ship-of-war is the only officer on her deck, was the minister to be the only man in his parish clothed with ecclesiastical authority; he was to be aided, supported, and surrounded by a staff of officers, a band of efficient elders and deacons; and as our ancestors thought that a minister had charge enough who had in his parish a thousand people, they thought an elder had charge enough who had in his district some ten or twenty families. They never dreamt of such a state of things as we have in our days in Scotland now. I can point to districts with the population of a parish, and parishes with the population of a county. Nor in the good and olden time did the elder fill a merely honorary or secular office; he did something else, and

something better, than stand by the plate, and vote in Presbytery and General Assembly. He visited the sick, his post was often at the bed of death, he counselled the erring, he went forth to the wilderness and brought the wanderer back to the fold, and was at once a father and a friend, a counsellor and a comfort to the families of his charge; he was known to all of them, and all of them were known to him; his name was a household word, and he could tell the name of every man, woman, and child, within his bounds; and frequently discharging offices both of temporal and spiritual kindness, he thus acquired, within his small and manageable locality, a moral influence that was omnipotent for good. By the smallness of the district the duties of the office were within the compass of men in active business, and as they could be done, they were done, and they were well done; while, as matters stand at present in many parishes, it is true, in respect both of ministers and elders, that their duties cannot be any thing like well done, and therefore they are in all cases imperfectly done, and in some not done at all. The beast lies down under its burden, and so does the man. I defy any minister holding a city charge in Edinburgh to do one-half, one-third his work, as it should be done; you may as well set a solitary man to reap the broad acres of a whole farm; and in such circumstances, there is felt a strong temptation to yield to despair, and to do little or nothing at all.

“Our present undertaking is intended to remedy these evils. We wish from its ruins to rebuild the ancient economy, and to restore what is not to be found now-a-days in any burgh in all broad Scotland—a manageable parish, split up into districts, each containing ten or twenty families, with the Gospel of its parish church as free as the water of its parish well, with a school where the children of the poorest may receive at least a Bible education, and with its minister, its elders, and its deacons, each in the active discharge of the duties of his own department. Such is the machinery that, before many weeks are gone, we trust to see in beautiful and blessed operation in the parish of St. John’s. And what good, it may be asked, do we expect to follow? No good at all, unless God give the blessing. Besides the machinery we must have the moving power; but if He smile upon our labors, we enter the field confident of victory. What this system has done in former days it can do again; and we have no fear, though the eyes of enemies should look on, for we are trying no novel, never-before-tried experiment. Our fathers tried it, and they triumphed in the trial; and with the same seed, the same sun, and the same soil, should not the same cultivation produce as abundant a harvest? The very fields that are now, alas! run rank with



weeds, blossomed, and bore their fruit, like a garden of the Lord. From the cavils of some, and the fears of others, we take our appeal to history; what is chronicled in its pages, of our country, when the parochial economy was in full and blessed operation? Kirkton tells us that you might have travelled many a mile and never heard an oath; that there was hardly a household to be found without its household altar; and that the only party who complained were the taverners, and their complaint was, that their trade was broken—men were turned so sober. The testimony of De Foe is to the same effect, and not less remarkable. He tells us, that a blind beggar on his way to Scotland could know when he crossed the border by the total absence of oaths and profanity in the language of the people; and down in these lanes, which are now the haunts of misery and crime, there are still vestiges to be found of the prevailing religion of other days; above many of their doorways one can still decipher a text of Scripture; and now, in those houses where it stands carved in stone by the piety of our ancestors, you may ascend, as I have often done, from the cellar to the garret, and, amid all the families that crowd the tenement, you will hardly find one Bible, one communicant, one solitary person that frequents the house of God. When we think of those who once inhabited these dwellings, and how the prayer and the psalm were once heard where debauchery now holds her riot, and where, on the very Sabbath-day, I have been compelled to cease my prayer, because, from a neighboring apartment, the sound of blows, the curses of men, and the screams of women, and the cries of murder have drowned my voice;—when we think of this melancholy contrast, who can help exclaiming, ‘How is the gold become dim, the most fine gold, how is it perished!’ I know there are men who have said that such cases are hopeless, who would thwart us if they could, and having laughed in ungodly scorn at the idea of building churches for these unhappy victims of their country’s neglect, would hand them over to the tender mercies of the policeman and the jailer. Hopeless! I deny that the case is hopeless, or the disease beyond the remedy. ‘Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?’ ‘Behold,’ says God, in answer to these unbelieving and paralyzing fears, ‘behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear.’ From what difficulties should they shrink who have such promises as these to fall back and rest on: ‘What art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain;’ ‘Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel, I will help thee, saith the Lord; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and



the winds shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them! and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel?' You may take a man to yon infirmary, and they may send him from their wards as incurable; you may take a man to a lunatic asylum, and they may give him over as a hopeless madman; the disease of the body and the delirium of the head may baffle the skill of man; but that man never walked this world whom God's gospel, with God's blessing, could not cure and convert; and we say, what an open church, and an open school, and a manageable parish, with its minister and multiplied elders, have, with God's blessing, done before, with the same blessing they can do again."

## APPENDIX.

### ON THE USE OF THE TITLE BISHOP.

The word bishop, we have seen, is employed in the New Testament synonymously with the term presbyter, as the special title or designation of that officer in the church whose duty it is to oversee, superintend, preside, preach, and administer the sacraments and discipline of the church. Other terms are employed for the same purpose, such as pastor, minister, angel, ambassador, and steward, but these two, viz., presbyter and bishop, are more frequently employed, and especially when the qualifications and duties of the office are distinctly pointed out.

When the apostles went about settling and completely organizing the churches, they ordained presbyters in every city. (Acts 14: 23.) When Paul took his final leave of the Ephesian Christians he called together their presbyters, whom he also denominates bishops, and whose office he clearly identifies with that of the preacher. (Acts 20: 17, &c.) When Paul writes to the church at Philippi, A. D. 62 or 63, he addresses himself only to the bishops and deacons. (Phil. 1: 1.) When Peter addresses all the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he exhorts only the presbyters that are among them. (1 Peter 5: 1, 2.) And in all the passages in which full and explicit delineations are given of the nature and qualifications of the ministry, the word bishop is employed (See 1 Tim. 3: 1-8, Titus 1: 5-9, & 1 Peter 5: 1-5.) In the second of these passages, (Titus 1: 5-9,) the term presbyter and the term bishop are both employed, and the officer denoted by them is clearly identified as an instructor in the faith.

Both these terms, though very similar in meaning, are used to designate the ministry, because the one—PRESBYTER—was familiar to the Jews, and not known among the other nations, and because the other—BISHOP—was familiar among the other nations, and not common among the Jews. And as most of the first Christian churches were composed of both converted Jews and Gentiles, it was important to use both titles for their teachers.

In the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament, the term bishop is very frequently employed to designate the office of overseer in a sense analogous to that in which it is employed in the New Testament. (Neh. 2: 9, 14: 22; Numb. 4: 16; 2 Kings 34: 12, 17.) The corresponding term "shepherds" is the common title given in the Old Testament to the doctors of the people and to the prophets. (Zech. 2: 8, &c.)

And it is expressly declared that the officers of the church, in the New Testament church, should be known by this title, (Isa. 60: 17,) "I will make thy officers (in the Greek *episcopi*, or bishops) peace." (See also Psalms 69: 25, compared with Acts 1: 20.) This very passage Clemens, in his Epistle to the Corinthian church, quotes in confirmation of his view of the officers of the church. We will only add, as has been already fully shown, that in the Jewish synagogue the title of bishop or its cognate terms, *chazan*, *angel*, &c., were given *exclusively* to the minister who presided, and who had the charge of preaching also.

And while it is thus manifest that both these titles were adopted by the apostolic churches, it is beyond controversy that they came to be the established names by which ministers were known in the period succeeding the apostolic age. No other words, except when they speak figuratively in order to vary their language, are found in THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS, nor are these titles used by them in any other than their original synonymous application to those who occupied the pastoral office. This I have fully proved elsewhere, and in part also in this volume. Neither can any man tell when, or why, the title of bishop came to be exclusively appropriated to an order of ministers *higher* than presbyters, and having supreme authority over them. That the terms presbyter and bishop are the same, and applied only to one and the same office in Scripture, all prelatists have been constrained to admit. And that there was a gradual change in the use of these words, until at length the term BISHOP was limited to the order of prelates, they also admit; but *when* or *why* this change was introduced they cannot, *because they will not*, tell. The truth is, as has been seen, that one of the presbyters or bishops being necessarily appointed—as is the case now among all Presbyterians—president or moderator of the body of presbyters, who watched over the interests of a whole neighborhood, and who, from the necessity of the case, then lived together, it became necessary to call him by some distinctive name. The apostles called this officer "the presiding presbyter," (1 Tim. 5: 17,) but as there were two principal titles for the ministry, it came afterwards to be the custom to call this "presiding presbyter," by way of brevity, "THE BISHOP," and the others "THE PRESBYTERS." And as many things then conspired to throw power and influence into the hands of this president, who was chosen for life, the application to him of the term "the bishop," came to be fixed, until at length it was regarded as indicating those prerogatives of authority and power which circumstances had attributed to his office. Thus was the higher order of prelatical bishops gradually introduced, with all the pride, ambi-

tion, and growing corruption, both in doctrine and in practice, to which the prelatical system has given birth.

This view of the primitive order of the church, will at once account for all subsequent changes; meet all the difficulties of the case; and resolve all the problems which are proposed. Thus, when prelatists draw out their lists and catalogues of successive bishops, in the several apostolic churches, we find them at once, so far as they are credible, in these presidents, who would naturally constitute the individual representatives of their brethren and contemporaries. In later times, when there were several congregations in the same presbytery, the president was made pastor of the *ecclesia principalis*, the *αυθεντικη χαθεδρα*, which was *ιδιος θρονος*, his peculiar throne, and thus would he in every way shine forth among the other stars, as the most eminent and brilliant. But, even then, these presidents were eminent only as the first in rank among their colleagues in the same *order and office*, just as were archdeacons among the deacons, archpresbyters among the presbyters, archbishops among the bishops, and patriarchs among the archbishops. Thus, also, among the *archontes* at Athens, while all were equal in power, yet was one called *archon*, by way of eminence. His name alone was inserted in the public records of that year, which was reckoned from him. And so also, was it among the five *epohri* at Sparta, of whom, in like manner, one was chosen as president, and actually denominated *προεστως*, as Plutarch informs us. So that a succession of single persons named above the rest in the apostolic churches, would never prove that they were any other than what we have described—the *προεστωτες* or presidents of the churches—especially as this title is given to presbyters' as well as bishops, even by Cyprian himself.

Again, when prelatists taunt us with the evident existence of diocesan prelacy at an early period, we find its origin in the corruption and abuse of this apostolic presbyterianism, or parochial episcopacy. "For," says the learned Whitaker, the darling of the Church of England, "as at the first one presbyter was set over the rest of the presbyters and made a bishop; so afterwards one bishop was set over the rest of the bishops. And thus that custom hatched the pope with his monarchy, and by degrees brought him into the church."

Such also is the opinion of Vitringa, who says:\* "From such acts of communion, there were derived, in course of time, titles and dignities altogether unknown in the early ages of the

\*De Vet. Synag., Part II., ch. iii., in Bernard's Synagogue, pp. 155, 156. See, also, pp. 178, 179, 214, and 229, where he shows how other similar errors crept in. Dr. Hinds traces these offices to the same origin. Hist. of Rise and Progress of Christianity, vol. i., p. 345.



church—for instance, it was necessary that some bishop should summon the council, that some bishop should preside, and as the presidents of the presbyteries had before this assumed to themselves authority, had taken exclusively the title of bishop, and thus came to be looked on as a distinct order from their presbyteries; just so, the presidents of these councils arrogated much to themselves, assumed a higher rank and office; and hence, the titles of archbishop, metropolitan, primate, patriarch, &c.”

Thus it came to pass, that the title of bishop was associated with all the pride, pomp, ambition, tyranny, licentiousness, ungodliness, and infamy of men who never, or very seldom, preached at all, and whose only business it was to LORD it over God's heritage, and to live in pomp and luxury, from the taxes imposed upon the enslaved and superstitious church. The very title of bishop therefore came to be identified with these enormities, and to be a hissing and a by-word in the mouth of all men. And when, therefore, the enormous mass of Romish corruptions was thrown off the almost smothered church, at the reformation, the reformers endeavored to cleanse the Augean stable and to restore the primitive purity and simplicity of Christ's church, they abstained for a time from the use of this abominated title of bishop, in order to do away the powerful association by which it was connected with all that was hateful and fearful. It is not, however, true, as some imagine, that they *rejected* the term, or were at all blind to its true and Scriptural meaning. On the contrary, they every where bring to light the Scriptural meaning and use of the word in all their standards and confessions; and every where contended for it as the true, proper, and only signification. This fact will not, and cannot be denied, since this demonstration of the original parity of the ministry constituted one of the very first towers of impregnable defence, into which the reformers betook themselves, and from which they could not be, and *were not*, dislodged.

Thus Milton, speaking of the Presbyterian form, says: “It is but episcopacy reduced to what it should be, and were it not that the tyranny of prelates, under the name of bishops, had made our ears tender and startling, we might call every good minister a bishop.”\*

The Helvetic Confession thus speaks: “Therefore the church ministers that now are may be called bishops, elders, (or presbyters,) pastors and doctors.”†

“Whereas,” says Calvin, “I have indiscriminately called

\*Prose Works, vol. i., p. 52. See, also, pp. 9, 14. See, also, Lord Brooke on Episcopacy, London, 1642, p. 2.

†Harmony of Confessions, pp. 234, 235.

those who govern the churches, bishops, presbyters, and pastors, I have done so according to the usage of Scripture, for WHOEVER executes the office of minister of the gospel, to them the Scriptures give the title of bishops.”\*

“There are four ordinary functions or offices in the Kirk of God,” says the Second Book of Discipline of 1578, “the office of the pastor, minister or bishop,” &c. (Ch. ii. § 6.) This it repeats in the chapter concerning them, (Ch. iv. § 1,) where it says they “are sometimes called episcopi or bishops, because they watch over the flock.” And they add this solemn advice to the several officers: “All these should take those titles and names only (lest they be exalted and puffed up in themselves) which the Scripture gives unto them, as these import labor, travell and work.” (Ch. iii. § 7.)

“There are,” said Adamson, in the General Assembly of 1572, “three sorts of bishops; my Lord bishop; my Lord’s bishop; and the Lord’s bishop. My Lord bishop was in the papistrie. My Lord’s bishop is now when my Lord gets the benefice, and the bishop serves for nothing but to make his title sure; and the Lord’s bishop is the true minister of the gospel.”†

Again, in 1576, the General Assembly decided that “the name of bishop is common to all who are appointed to take charge of a particular flock, in preaching the word, administering the sacraments, and exercising discipline with the consent of the elders.” This was in the days of Knox and Melville. And Calderwood says: “The Pastor can see no Lord-bishop in Scripture but the Lord’s bishop only,—a name of labor and diligence, and not of honor and ease.”‡

So much for the Church of Scotland; and as it regards the Church of England, a candid Episcopalian writer says: “It was the judgment of her founders, (that is, of the Church of England,) PERHAPS UNANIMOUSLY, but at all events generally, that the bishop of the primitive church was merely a presiding elder; a presbyter ruling over presbyters; identical in order and commission; superior only in degree and authority.”§ But for the full quotations on this point, I refer the reader elsewhere.†† We will only here say, that in the “Declaration of the Functions of Bishops and Priests, &c.,” it is said: “Yet the truth is, that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests (presbyters) OR BISHOPS.” And to

\*Comment. on Titus, 1: 5.

†See similar views of, in a sermon as quoted by Jameson in *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, p. 55.

‡The Pastor and Prelate, 1628, pp. 2, 3.

§Essays on the Church, p. 251.

††See *Presbytery and Prelacy*, p. 429, &c.

this opinion these English reformers were more readily led, because it was the unanimous judgment of the Canonists and Schoolmen as well as of many of the most eminent of the Fathers. Thus one of the Decretals collected by Pope Gregory IX. was: "We call the Diaconate and the Episcopate sacred orders, because the primitive church is recorded to have held these alone."‡ And the Council of Trent itself was forced to allow that "the name and title of bishop was common to both" bishops and presbyters.§

The Divines of the Westminster Assembly were very full and explicit on this subject. In their debates on 1 Tim. 5: 17, as referring to ruling elders, Mr. Palmer argued that the passage could not refer to two sorts of officers, otherwise it would imply "two sorts of bishops," which was thought to be a sufficient absurdity at once to overthrow such an interpretation. But had he only enjoyed a little of our "new light," he would at once doubtless have perceived that our ruling elders are and must be bishops, and that *therefore* the passage *must* refer to *them*.\*\*

The authors of Smectymnuus, written in A. D. 1641, by five of the most influential members of the Assembly, viz., Messrs. Marshall, Calamy, Young, Newcomen, and Sparstow, prove at length that it is of great importance to resume the familiar use of the term bishop. They say,†† "Whether it be fit that the name bishop, which in Scripture is common to the presbyters with the bishops, (and not only in Scripture, but also in antiquity for some hundreds of years,) should still be appropriated to Bishops, and ingrossed by them, and not rather to be made common to all Presbyters; and the rather, because, first we finde by wofull experience, that the great Equivocation that lyeth in the name Bishop, HATH BEENE, AND IS AT THIS DAY A GREAT PROP AND PILLAR TO UPHOLD LORDLY PRELACY, FOR THIS IS THE GREAT GOLIAH, THE MASTER-PIECE, AND INDEED THE ONLY ARGUMENT WITH WHICH THEY THINKE TO SILENCE ALL OPPOSERS. To wit, the antiquitie of Episcopacie, that it hath continued in the church of Christ for 1500 yeares, &c., which argument is cited by this Remonstrant *ad nauseum usque et usque*. Now it is evident that this argument is a *Paralogisme*, depending upon the Equivocation of the name Bishop. For Bishops in the apostles' times were the same with Presbyters in name and office, and so for a good while after. And when, afterwards, they came to be distinguished, the Bishops of the Primitive times differed as much from ours now, as Rome ancient from Rome at this day, as hath been sufficiently de-

‡Ibid., p. 409, &c.

§Reynoldson, in Boyce, *Anc't Episcop.*, p. 17.

\*\*Lightfoot's Works, vol. xiii., p. 75; also pp. 43, 46, 51, and 54.

††See pp. 91-93.

clared in this Booke. AND THE BEST WAY TO CONFUTE THIS ARGUMENT IS BY BRINGING IN A COMMUNITY OF THE NAME BISHOP TO A PRESBYTER AS WELL AS TO A BISHOP.

"Secondly, because wee finde that the late Innovators which have so much disturbed the peace and purity of our church, did first begin with the alteration of words; and by changing the word Table into the word Altar; and the word Minister into the word Priest; and the word Sacrament into the word Sacrifice, have endeavored to bring in the Popish Masse. And the apostle exhorts us, 2 Tim. 1: 13, *to hold fast the forms of sound words*; and 1 Tim. 6: 20, *to avoid the profane novelties of words*. Upon which text we will only mention what the Rhemists have commented, which we conceive to be worthy consideration, (Nam instruunt nos non solum docentes, sed etiam errantes.) The church of God hath always beene as diligent to resist novelties of words, as her adversaries are busie to invent them, for which cause she will not have us communicate with them, nor follow their fashions and phrase newly invented, though in the nature of the words sometimes there be no harme. LET US KEEPE OUR FOREFATHERS' WORDS, AND WE SHALL EASILY KEEPE OUR OLD AND TRUE FAITH, THAT WE HAD OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS!"

The sentiments of these divines may be further learned from a judgment given by the British Parliament in 1645, which we take from a publication entitled "An Ordinance of the Lord's and Commons assembled in Parliament, &c. London, 1645, 4to. "Whereas," they say, "the word PRESBYTER, that is to say, ELDER, and the word BISHOP, do in the Scripture intend and signify one and the same function, although the title of bishop hath been *by corrupt custom* appropriated to one, and that unto him ascribed, and by him assumed, as in other things, so in the matter of ordination, that was not meet: which ordination, notwithstanding, being performed by him, a Presbyter joined with other Presbyters, we hold for substance to be valid, and not to be disclaimed by any that have received it; and that Presbyters so ordained, being lawfully thereunto appointed and authorized, may ordain other Presbyters," &c.

Other testimonies might be adduced, but it is unnecessary. The views of Baxter and Lazarus Seaman have been adduced.\* Owen is very strong: "For the right and duty of rule is," says he, "inseparable from the office of elders, which ALL BISHOPS OR PASTORS ARE." "Some there are," he adds, "who begin to maintain that there is no need of any more but *one pastor, bishop or elder*, in a particular church, other elders (whom

\*See Baxter on Episcop. ch. iii. pp. 11, 12, 156; Pt. ii. p. 5; and Disput. on Ch. Gov. 218.



he elsewhere calls assistants) for to rule being unnecessary.”§†

Milton will also represent the opinions of his time. In his Treatise of Christian Doctrine, he says:§§ “The ordinary ministers of a particular church are presbyters and deacons. Presbyters are otherwise called bishops . . . . . bishops and presbyters must therefore have been the same.”

Elsewhere he says: “Bishops and presbyters are the same to us both in name and thing.”\* “It will not be denied that in the Gospel there be but two ministerial degrees, presbyters and deacons.”† “Through all which book can be nowhere, either by plain text or solid reasoning, found any difference between a bishop and a presbyter, save that they be two names to signify the same order.”‡ “A bishop and presbyter is all one both in name and office.”§

The conclusion of the whole matter then is, that among all the reformed churches there was at first undivided agreement in the opinion that the title of bishop belonged to presbyters or ministers. They also did in fact so apply it in all their official documents and standards, and in all their arguments with Romanists and prelatists. The term *bishop* therefore is the official title given by the reformers in common with *presbyter*, to the ministers of the gospel. And though, for the reasons we have given, the common use of this term in every day parlance was not thought expedient, yet we have seen that such a use of the word was plainly desired and ultimately expected, and its importance fully appreciated.

And since the obloquy and disgrace then commonly attached to the very term bishop, is no longer associated with it; since on the contrary it is now connected with the highest office for dignity and honor in a large branch of the church; and since the very scripturality of *the name* is made a ground for supporting the scripturality of this *prelatical office*;—it is high time that the public mind should be disabused, and the true nature of the Christian ministry be held up to the public view by appropriating to it the name and title which were given to it by its great founder.

So thought the framers of our standards. I do not recollect, nor can I find, any passage (except that in which all the various names of the ministry are given, with their explanations, Form of Government, chap. iv.) in which ministers are called

§†Works, vol. xx. pp. 478, 480, 481. See, also, Lord Brooke on Episcopacy, p. 2; Professor Jameson's Fundamentals of the Hierarchy, pp. 55 and 213; Dr. Aleander's Hist. of the Westminster Assembly, p. 88; Jameson's History of the Culdees, pp. 330-332.

§§Vol. ii. pp. 180; 181.

\*Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, Prose Works, i. 314.

†Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings, &c. iii. 356.

‡Of Prelatical Episcopacy, i. 60.

§Ibid. 75. See, also, page 76.

*presbyters.* The word is certainly not used in the whole of our *Confession of Faith*, but only the term *minister*. (See chap. xxv. § 3; chap. xxvii. § 5; chap. xxviii. § 2.) Neither is it employed in the Larger Catechism, (see Questions 108, 150, 169,) nor in our other standards, so far as I have remarked.

The term most frequently employed in our standards to characterize the ministry is the word *minister*. (Conf. of Faith as above; Form of Government, chap. i. § 2; chap. ix. § 4; chap. x. § 7, 8; chap. xv. § 2; chap. xxii. 3.)

The word *teacher* is also once used as a general term for ministers. (Form of Government, Introduction, § 5.)

The term *pastor* is also, in a very few cases, used in reference to the charge of a particular flock. (Form of Government, chap. ix. § 1, and chap. xv. § 1.) But this word "*pastor*" is not the term, as is supposed, most frequently applied to the settled ministers of particular churches. The term *minister* is much more frequently applied for this purpose. (See Form of Government, chap. x. § 2; chap. xiii. § 4; 16 title, and sections 2, 3; Directory, chap. ii. § 2; chap. iii. § 3; chap. v. § 4; chap. vi. § 1; chap. xii., &c.)

And now as to the term *bishop*. In the very first place in which our Book defines particularly and carefully the officers of the church, (Form of Government, chap. iii.,) the teachers or ministers are expressly denominated "*bishops*" or "*pastors*," the two words which have the same meaning in their original derivation. The term *bishop* is here used for ministers universally, whether they are in charge or not, and whether they are evangelists or not, just as it was used by the prophets to signify doctors who had no particular charge. The next chapter is headed "*Of Bishops or Pastors*," (chap. iv.,) and under this heading the term *Presbyter* is given, as the *fourth* term applied to the office, while the term "*bishop*" is also used. It is also found in many other places, and in the same *unlimited* sense. It is not confined to a minister having charge of a fixed congregation. It is applied to the ministers who constitute (with the elders, who are carefully distinguished) a Synod; (Form of Government, chap. xi. § 1;) and that it is here to be taken in its unlimited sense, appears from the fact that in section second it is interchanged with the term "*minister*." So also it is applied to the members of the General Assembly, (chap. xii. § 2,) who are also called "*ministers*." (Sections 2, 3 and 7.)

Again in chap. xvi. § 1, which is headed "*Of the translation or removing a Minister from one charge to another*," it is said, "*no bishop shall be translated*," &c. In the second and third

sections it goes on to speak of these same "bishops" as "ministers."

Again in our Book of Discipline, chap v., we are instructed as to "Process against a Bishop or Minister."

In a note to chapter iv. of the Form of Government it is expressly thought, that "*as the office and character of the Gospel Minister is particularly and fully described in the Holy Scriptures under the title of Bishop—and as the term is peculiarly expressive of his duty as an Overseer of the flock, it ought not to be rejected.*"

This judgment of our church we believe to be important, and worthy of being carried out into practical application at the present time. Romanism and prelacy are making desperate efforts to sustain the divine right and title of their apostolical succession of "bishops," with all its consequent claim to an exclusive possession of the marks and elements and grace of the true church of Jesus Christ. Now this doctrine we believe to be the mark of the beast, the very evidence and proof of Antichrist, and the blasphemy of the foretold usurper who should sit in the temple of God as God, and arrogate to his unchristian system of formalism and superstition the name, title, and attributes of God's visible church. We are bound therefore to contend earnestly against this radical error, from which so many other errors spring; and by laying our axe to the root of the tree, most certainly destroy its baneful and destructive growth.

Now to our mind it seems clear that this whole pyramid of error took its rise from the early and gradual appropriation of the *scriptural term bishop* to the unscriptural and *man-made prelate*. For by covering himself with the garb and character of God's true ministry, the wolf got undiscovered entrance into the fold, and remained unobserved, until by his gradual efforts he had secured to himself power and might, when he was enabled to throw aside his sheep's clothing and subject the simple-minded and unthinking sheep to his imperial and irresistible sway. And by the very same process by which the wolf got *into* the fold, is he to *get out*. Full many of the thoughtless sheep are still led only by outside appearances, and are therefore satisfied that prelates are what they pretend to be, because they wear God's own heaven-appointed title, undisputed and uncontradicted. Names are things.\* They are realities. They speak louder than books or refutations, and are heard by those who cannot and who will not read. And from our own efforts to find out the truth in the case, we are verily of opinion that three-fourths even of the most intelligent

\*On this subject see Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, p. 152, Eng. ed., and Taylor's *Ancient Christianity*, vol. i. p. 74.



prelatists could give no better reason for believing in *their* "Bishop" than the fact that he is *a* bishop, and that the Bible most assuredly speaks of bishops.

We are therefore called upon, not only in our standards, but in our official documents and daily usage, to proclaim abroad and in the ears of all men, that prelatical bishops are deceivers and impostors; that they are wolves in sheep's clothing;—and that they are the thieves of whom our Saviour speaks, who came not in by the door, but climbed up some other way into the fold. They are they who, when the good man of the house was asleep, came in and took possession, and having robbed him of his "good name," turned him out of doors, proclaimed themselves masters of the house, and then proceeded to beat the Lord's servants and unmercifully to abuse and enslave them to their vile ends of corruption and heresy.

Such a common and familiar use of the term bishop, not to the exclusion of any other, but in interchange with them, we are under obligation to adopt.

It is due to God, and is positively required at our hands. It is said indeed, that because the term bishop has been so long appropriated in this way, that its original sense would not be understood without a comment, and that therefore, "to avoid the trouble, let our ministers be called by that name by which they are most generally known."

Now is there not a glaring inconsistency between these premises and this conclusion? By whom is this appropriation made? By the reformers?—No, they unanimously rejected it. By the framers of our standards?—No, I have shown that they openly, and loudly and constantly protested against it. By the church of Scotland?—No, I have given proof that she has always demanded and is now reclaiming this too much disused title. By the Congregationalists?—No, they too are contending for the truth in this matter. By our Baptist friends?—No, they too are restoring the word to its proper and familiar usage. By our own church?—No, in her published records you find her ministers put down as *bishops*—while in many of her synods and presbyteries the same proper custom is adopted. This robbery then is sanctioned only by the depredators—and is this a reason for allowing them a peaceful possession of stolen goods? Surely not.

Have we a *right* to allow prelatists and Romanists this peaceable appropriation? I trow not. This is not a matter of indifference, but of moment. Did not the Holy Ghost himself expressly make and denominate presbyters *bishops*? Is not this solemn truth more than once distinctly affirmed in Scripture? (See Acts 20: 28, and 1 Peter 5: 2.) And does not the same divine Spirit every where in the Bible use the



term bishop and the term presbyter for one and the same ministry? Have we then any *liberty to lay down* or to *disuse* this title? Have we any power to allow corrupters of God's word and ordinances to appropriate this title to diocesan prelates—the fruitful source of all ecclesiastical evils? Can we, as Christians—as Presbyterians—who are set for the defence and maintenance of the truth, give place to such unhallowed perversions of God's Word, and abuse of God's Holy Spirit?

But we may do so, it is said, to avoid the trouble of giving a comment! And is it thus we act in reference to the equally appropriate claim to “catholicity”—to “the one holy and apostolical church”—“the true church”—“penance”—“confession”—“regeneration”—“priest”—“altar”—“sacrifice”—and many other similar things? Is it not the glory of OUR CHURCH that she is A PROTESTANT—that is, a protesting—church, continually bearing her testimony for all that is truth, and against all that is error—whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear? Let us then for God's sake—for the truth's sake—for the sake of a pure Bible, and church, and ministry, and worship—proclaim with all our might that OUR MINISTERS ARE THE TRUE SCRIPTURAL BISHOPS, AND THAT PRELATES ARE USURPERS OF A TITLE TO WHICH THEY HAVE NO ONE SINGLE CLAIM OR QUALIFICATION, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

We are required therefore from duty to God, and to his inspired word; and to our belief in its full and plenary inspiration, and *the designed intention* with which it has ordained *all that pertains* to the church and its ministry, to retain, and use, and glory in the name and title of bishop; and to contend earnestly against those who have audaciously set themselves in opposition to the Lord and his anointed servants. But *consistency* not less than *duty* and a sense of justice, demand the same course. We affirm that the term bishop is synonymous with the term minister. So thought our reformers, and so teach our standards every where. And yet while other claimants daily and constantly deny our teaching, and appropriate this title to an order of ministers whom we regard as introduced by men, and not by God, shall we tamely allow them the undivided use of a title which our divine Master placed as a diadem around our brow; told us to wear as a crown of honor; and which we can never forfeit or lay aside, without disgrace, dishonor, and defeat? Such a use of this title therefore we owe to ourselves, to our Protestant brethren, to God who called us to this liberty; and not less to those who, to their own injury and to the injury of the church of Christ, commit such crying sin against the truth, inspiration and integrity of the Bible, and against the rights of the church universal.

We are called to this duty *in self-defence*. Our standards already proclaim to the world our claim to the title of bishop. Our arguments with prelatists every where assume and urge these claims. And whatever opprobrium, or misconception, or abusive imputation of ambitious or improper motives may be made, *are now and have been* incurred. We are already, and necessarily, implicated in all this evil, if evil it be. And we are so while we reject the common use of this term, without the opportunity of self-defence, and in an attitude of glaring inconsistency and cowardly timidity which bespeaks conscious diffidence in the justice of our claims. But by boldly, openly, and as men, assuming our divine title, we will then make it necessary for those who know not the truth to find it out, and for those who do not think upon it, to lay it to heart and feel all its impressiveness and force.

It has been urged indeed in opposition to this course, "that the term bishop, ever since the word was adopted from the Saxon, has been given to a superior order of clergy, and that general use has fixed that signification of the term." It is therefore argued, that since the term bishop is exclusively a Saxon word, and has ever designated a superior order of clergy, Presbyterian ministers cannot employ it without absurdity and contradiction.

Now the basis of this argument we reject as contrary to fact. It is not true that the term bishop is exclusively Saxon, or that it has always been allowed to mean a superior order of clergy, such as prelates. This we will prove by the testimony of Richardson and Webster. Such objectors have been misled by the partial exhibition of the true relations of this word as given by Dr. Johnson.

"THIS WORD (BISHOP,) says Richardson,\* "UPON THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY FOUND ITS WAY INTO ALL THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGES. A. Saxon, bisceop; Dutch, bishop; German, bischof; Swedish, biskop; French, evesque; Italian, vescovo; Spanish, obispo. A bishop," he adds, "is literally an overlooker, an overseer." This is the only meaning he gives the word.

"This Greek and Latin word," says Webster,† giving the Greek and Latin forms of the word Bishop, "ACCOMPANIED THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY into the west and north of Europe, and has been corrupted into the Saxon, biscop; Swedish and Danish, biskop; Dutch, bisschop; German, bischof; Italian, vescovo; French, evesque; Spanish, obispo; Portuguese, bispo; Welsh, esgob; and Irish, easgob; in Arabic and Persic, oškof." And the two first meanings given to the word, are—

\*Dictionary of the English Language.

†Ibid. edition of 1841.

"1. An overseer or spiritual superintendent, ruler, or director;  
2. In the Primitive Church, a spiritual overseer; an Elder or Presbyter; one who had the pastoral care of the church."

Now, from these facts and statements it is manifest—

1. That the term bishop is a corruption of the Greek word *episcopos*, the first letter being left off, and *p* softened into *b*, thus making *biscop*.

2. That the Greek word *episcopos* used in the New Testament to designate the ministry, was, *from the very introduction of Christianity*, carried with the Gospel and the ministers of the Gospel, into all the languages of the countries into which Christianity was introduced.

3. That the various churches in all parts of the world, in order to designate the ministry of the Gospel, did NOT adopt a term which had been used among them to imply a superior order above some inferior order, but did, *by express design*, adopt, in some modified form of pronunciation, the original term given to the ministry by the Holy Ghost in Scripture.

4. That the term bishop is not Saxon, but the Greek word *episcopos* shortened into *piscopos*, thence into *piscop*, and thence, for the sake of euphony, into *biscop* and bishop.

5. That in the primitive use of this word, in all parts of the world, and in all languages, it meant, not a superior order of clergy, but just what it means in the word of God, "an elder or presbyter, one who had the pastoral care of the church." And if the reader will look into the author's work on "Presbytery and Prelacy," (see pp. 111-114, &c.,) he will find abundant proof from the fathers to show that the term continued to be regarded in the same light for centuries.

The English term *bishop* is therefore the Greek term *episcopos*, modified so as to suit the idiom of the language. Now what is the meaning of the Greek term *episcopos* throughout the New Testament? Let Bishop Onderdonk answer. "The name bishop," says this prelatie champion, "which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriated to that office in Scripture. That name is there given to the middle order of presbyters; and all that we read in the New Testament concerning bishops, (including of course the words overseer and oversight,) is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade." Such is the admission of Bishop Onderdonk, which no man of understanding will now venture to gainsay. And what then is and must be the inference? It is manifestly this, that since the English word *bishop* is the Greek word *episcopos*, only in a modified form, the English term bishop can of right refer only to the order of presbyters, and not to the higher grade of prelates. The term bishop does not, AND CANNOT, by



any use of man, be made to mean a superior order of clergy; but is exclusively applicable to the one order of presbyters.

This whole argument is, therefore, a flimsy sophistry, founded on a baseless assumption, which is the very reverse of the truth in the case.

Now, as we regard this question, it is a matter of great and momentous consequence. It involves the whole question of the Divine inspiration and authority of the sacred volume; the supremacy of God's word; and the sovereignty and headship of Christ, as the only lawgiver and legislator of his church. God seems to have thrown around this matter the most solemn and unutterable sanctions, for it is explicitly declared that presbyters are made and denominated *episcopoi*, that is, *bishops*, "by the Holy Ghost." Here the title of bishops is given by the Holy Ghost to presbyters, and not to any superior order of clergy. The word bishop is not then an old Saxon term for a superior order of officers, but is expressly, and by design, the original Greek term modified and altered, so as to become a Saxon and English word.

Is this, or is it not, the case? If it is—and who can deny that it is?—then who is he that will dare to sanction the appropriation of this term to an order of clergy superior to presbyters? What is this but to assume Divine prerogatives; to undo what God has done; to unsay what God has said; to gain-say the Holy Ghost himself; to tread under foot the inspired volume; and by the authority of man to alter and subvert the teachings of heaven? We have no more right to alter the decision and teaching of God respecting the title bishop, than we have respecting the doctrine of justification by faith. The one, as much as the other, is above our reach and beyond our power. We have no liberty in this matter. It is not a question of expediency at all. It is a matter of revelation, and of plain, positive, and commanded duty.

"But for fifteen centuries," it is said, "the world has attached to the term bishop the idea of a superior order of clergy." And what is that to us? For the same time it has overturned the order of Christ's house and the doctrines of Christ's gospel, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men. Our creed is not found in the faith or practice of the last fifteen centuries, but in "the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever." Here is our faith, and woe is unto us if we do not teach whatsoever is here commanded, even though it be "one of the least commandments."

"But the assumption of the title bishop, will inevitably subject us to popular suspicion and ridicule." Let it do so. Let men laugh at us, and have us in derision. This is not our business or our concern. Duty is ours. God has spoken, and we



cannot alter his declarations. We must obey God rather than men. We must do nothing less than God requires, and ALL that he requires. And as he has, by the Holy Ghost, given to presbyters this title of bishop, it is our duty to give it to them also. But all this dread of ridicule is pusillanimous and cowardly. The world cannot meet the question and ridicule us. They will themselves be put to shame. Our use of the term will lead to inquiry, and inquiry to conviction, and conviction to the commendation and imitation of our course. Whether we can alter current views or not, in this case we are bound to try, and, as far as we are concerned, to persist. The world is as much against our doctrines as against our polity. But both are of God, and both must be held forth, whether men will laugh or curse, hear or forbear. Neither will we bear our testimony in vain. Other denominations are joining us, and most assuredly the time is coming, WHEN THE TITLE BISHOP, GIVEN BY THE HOLY GHOST TO PRESBYTERS, WILL BE GIVEN TO NONE BUT PRESBYTERS.

Other objections might be distinctly noticed, and have been replied to elsewhere, but it is unnecessary, as they have been already indirectly adverted to, or altogether removed. We will only notice one or two remaining difficulties. "So plain and so particular are our standards on this subject," it has been said, "that when a man is ordained a minister, *sine titulo*, he is not called a Bishop at all, but an *Evangelist*; that is, a presbyter, not bound to any particular parish or cure—a presbyter like about one-half of those in our church; for I presume at least that proportion were either ordained evangelists or are acting as such. It is supremely idle to call a man *bishop* whose relation to a cure of souls is not sufficient to warrant our calling him, in any proper sense, even an evangelist."

We are very much amazed at the statements in this objection. The definition here given of an evangelist, so as to serve the purpose of the objector, is not that given by the standards, or the usage of our church. Our standards define this office in chapter xv. and chapter xviii. of "The Form of Government." In chapter xv. § 15, an evangelist is defined to be one ordained "to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances, and organize churches *in frontier or destitute settlements*." And in chapter xviii., he is in like manner spoken of as "a missionary sent to any part to plant churches or to supply vacancies, and ordained without relation to particular churches."

Our Book, therefore, does not plainly and particularly attach the term evangelist to all ministers who may at any time be without charge. Neither would the term be understood, if used in reference to a minister who is at the time not in charge of a congregation, though locally occupied in some other busi-

ness of the church. And we have already seen that *our church, in her public standards, plainly, and indubitably, and repeatedly, employs the term bishop for ministers universally, whether they are in charge or not.* That our church has done wrong in ordaining men when they were not sent forth as evangelists, nor installed over any particular charge, is unquestionably true. But this evil is not remedied by withdrawing from such persons the name of bishop, but by the church courts taking heed not to lay hands suddenly or unadvisedly on any man.

But we proceed to notice the last objection. "While I am on this topic," says the same eminent objector, "let me suggest a collateral doubt. If it is a bishop that we all must be, then bishop be it. But in this case none but *bona fide* bishops can sit in our church courts."

In this objection, the author assumes the very point in dispute, to wit, that they only are *bona fide* bishops, who are placed over some particular church, whereas the contrary has been made incontrovertibly plain. Our standards do not thus use the term bishop, but use it in a general sense, as applicable to all ministers who have been ordained. So much, therefore, for these objections to the use of the term bishop. Whether they have any manner of weight in them, we leave our readers to judge; certain it is that the use of the term is authorized and required by our own Standards—by the Word of God—and by all the Presbyterian churches throughout the world—and also by expediency, consistency, and a due regard to our own character and standing.

This objector adds: "Let us not go too fast. Our fathers were wise men, and we shall find, if we will carefully examine, that their smallest doings had sense in them, and Scripture for them. Some think we are all very wise too, and perhaps we all are. I only suggest doubts."

Now the sarcasm here is entirely misapplied, and turns only its keen edge against its author. HE IS THE INNOVATOR. HE LIBELS THE WISDOM AND GOOD SENSE OF OUR FATHERS. He it is who would oppose the use of a term for which, *as even he allows*, we have the unquestionable sanction of Scripture. His doubts are therefore baseless. They neither rest on the authority of our standards—of our fathers—or of Scripture. That in Scripture the term bishop is employed as a general title, and applied to all ministers our objector allows, whatever more extended application he may *suppose* it to have. That it is thus used in our standards, we have abundantly shown. And that it was thus used by our fathers, "whose smallest doings had sense in them, and Scripture for them," we have fully demonstrated. Let the objector then be assured of the perfect truth and applicability of what he says, and which we cordially

adopt: "One thing I find, and I find it more and more as I advance in years, and therefore more wary; there is often more in a thing than one sees at first. So I am well satisfied it is here; and for one, I stand by old land-marks."

Let us then, without fear or shame, ridicule, or banter, or the absurd imputation of vanity or ambition—let us introduce familiarly the use of the title bishop in that sense in which it has been given in Scripture, and ever used by our fathers, and by our present standards.

We will only add, as one additional reason, that to the use of this title of bishop in all our ecclesiastical proceedings and public references and advertisements, we are urged by the widespread unanimity with which our churches of every name, and in every land, are now reverting to this practice, and openly acting upon it. We had noted down many references to the common and designed use of this word in the works and periodicals of many different denominations, both in this country and in England; but the practice has now become so common, that any specification would be useless. The formal determination has been made by many bodies in this country to introduce this term into their customary proceedings. This has been done by some of the New-England Associations, by the Baptist denomination, by the Lutheran church, and by many Presbyterian bodies. It is now very common in Scotland; is under consideration among the Congregationalists; is, to some extent, supported by the Wesleyan body,\* and has, as we were informed in Ireland, occupied the attention of the Congregational body in that country, by one of whose ministers we were requested to prepare this summary of our views upon the subject.

The adoption of the term bishop equally concerns all denominations, and if all unite in the practice, or even a considerable number, the term will come sufficiently into use to secure the ends in view. For ourselves, we regard the matter as of great practical moment; and while it can do no harm, it will, we think, accomplish much good. The use of the term we are not at liberty to abolish, if we could; and every reason forbids such a disuse of it, if it were allowable. Not only is it true, as we have said, that to many the common and apparently unquestioned use of the term authenticates the scriptural claims of prelatical bishops, but it is also true, (and to this closing remark we ask special attention,) that from this established use of the word even the most learned advocates of prelacy are in the constant habit of inferring the existence of *such prelatical bishops* in the early ages and writers of the Christian church. We have met with no writer on the Episcopal side of the ques-

\*See Powel on the Apostolical Succession.



tion, not excluding the late, but now degraded Bishop Onderdonk, who does not pursue this most jesuitical and irrational mode of defence. Why they do so is very obvious, since this play upon words is *THE ONLY* possible pretence by which the earliest writers *can be forced* to speak like Episcopalians, or make out even *three* of *the many* orders which the prelacy has made essential to the church. But *how* they can do so, in common honesty, is another question, which is very far from being open to an easy explanation. When such writers are *compelled* to do so, they will assume great credit for candor by admitting that in Scripture the terms bishop and presbyter are synonymous. But instead of arguing from this established meaning of the word in interpreting the fathers,—until these fathers themselves teach us that a different interpretation had been adopted by them, however wrongly,—they assume, on the contrary, that because at a *late* period in the history of the church the word bishop undoubtedly did mean an order claiming higher powers than presbyters, that *therefore* it must be understood *in this sense* in the very *earliest* of the fathers. But the same reasoning would justify the interpretation of the word bishop in this prelati- cal sense in the Scriptures, which they admit cannot be the case; and it would also justify all the other heresies and abuses which the Romish church bases upon the *present* conventional use of such words as priest, high-priest, altar, penance, confirmation, confess, &c.

The importance, therefore, of familiarizing the minds of men with the true and only proper meaning of the word bishop—for let it never be forgotten that this is a term which the Holy Ghost has thought fit himself to define and appropriate—must be apparent. With this meaning clearly before them, they will be prepared to read the early fathers, or passages from them, understandingly, and not through the medium of Episcopal bias and unrighteous prejudice; and they will not therefore be so ready, as thousands have been, to fall into the trap laid for them by crafty men, who lie in wait to deceive and ensnare souls into their dangerous and delusive system. And if at any time it is important, and our duty, to preserve men within the limits of that church which we believe to be most accordant to the pattern laid down in the mount; how much more is this the case *now*, when the distinction between low and high church Episcopalians has been openly discarded even by such organs as “The Episcopal Recorder;” when the low church party, represented by the Cecils, the Newtons, the Venns, and the Scotts, no longer exists in any avowed form or to any extent; when the lowest Episcopalians now to be found are “EVANGELICAL HIGH-CHURCHMEN;” (a contradiction, and an absurdity;) and when the only ambition now found among this party is to exalt



their denomination, and to reject as slanderous, all allusions to any difference or division or possible separation in the Episcopal church. The truth has now been openly and unquestionably sacrificed in that church to the claims of heretical unity and fictitious peace, and they who should be found coming out from a body now given over to the belief and approval of false and dangerous doctrines, are on the contrary found glorying in their shame.\*

We rejoice, therefore, that in our place in the General Assembly of our church some years ago, we were permitted to give origin to the present extended movement on this subject, by the introduction and subsequent discussion of the following overture. "Whereas in the New Testament the term bishop is used synonymously with that of presbyter as descriptive of the ministerial office; whereas this term has come, by the ecclesiastical usage of a particular denomination, to be appropriated to an order of ministers claiming to be superior to, and distinct from, presbyters; and whereas from our reluctance—in consequence of its association with intolerance and civil jurisdiction—to employ this term in its original and proper signification, (as used in our standards,) this error has been countenanced and greatly promoted. Therefore resolved, that the General Assembly recommends to all its Synods and Presbyteries to employ the term bishop in their regular minutes, lists, and statistical tables; and to all ministers, elders, and church members, to introduce the use of the term, as the ordinary official title of ministers, on all proper occasions."

In allusion to these efforts, Mr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, in his *Manual of Presbyterianism* says:§ "Episcopalians obtain an undue advantage over their brethren in other communions, from the word "bishop" in the English language having come to describe the overseer, not of a congregation, but of the clergy. This is not, however, its original meaning. It simply signifies an "overseer." Presbyterians and Congregationalists are equally entitled to use it as Episcopalians, and to apply it to their ministers as "overseers" of the Christian people. Where met with in Scripture, Christians should always remember that it means nothing but the pastor and overseer of the congregation, and that the same is its meaning in the earliest period of the primitive church.

And in his work on the eldership, Mr. Lorimer adds:† "Perhaps it would tend to correct false impressions as to officers in the Presbyterian church, were the Presbyterians of this country to adopt the practice which is followed by their brethren in the

\*Of course there are noble individual exceptions, but they are very much out of place, and impotent to stem the tide of evil.

§Edinb. 1842, p. 29.

†Glasgow, 1841, p. 44

United States of America, of using only Scriptural names when speaking of their ecclesiastical officers. Thus, in reporting members to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, ministers are styled bishops, and elders are denominated ruling elders. This restores the word bishop to its primitive Scripture meaning, and deprives our Episcopalian friends of an undue advantage which they possess, from the popular impression that there can be no bishops but diocesan bishops, such as govern the Church of England, owing to the word in common speech being appropriated to them. In the same way, the term elder would be speedily freed from absurd and unmerited reproach. More error is conveyed and perpetuated by incorrect names than many imagine. They exert an injurious influence even over minds which know better."

## NOTES.

### NOTE A.

The following vindication of the order of the Free Church Assembly, on Elders and Deacons, is taken from *The Free Church Magazine* for August.

#### *The Assembly's Act on Elders and Deacons.*

Two objections may be, perhaps we should say, have been, urged against this Act, and we propose here shortly to consider them. The one is, that too much power is given to the Deacons; and the other that too much power is given to the Elders.

The first objection is that too much power is given to the Deacons. On referring to Scripture, we find that the Deacon's office was established because of complaints that the poor were not sufficiently attended to, and the Deacons were appointed for the distribution of the alms of the church among such of the disciples as had need. "Look ye out among you," said the apostles, "seven men, whom we may appoint over *this* business." It is nowhere *expressly* stated that any portion of the ecclesiastical goods was to be administered by them, except that which was destined for the relief of the poor.—Acts 6: 1-4; 1 Tim. 3: 8-13. Now, the objection is, that the Act of Assembly gives the Deacon a much more extensive charge, and invests him with authority in the disposal of the whole of the church's patrimony,—not only that which consists in alms for the poor, but also that which is designed for the support of the ministry, and for the erection and repair of our places of worship.

It is true that the Act in question does all this, and that in all temporal matters whatever, in the whole secular business of the congregation, it places the Deacon on a perfect equality with the Elder, so far as determining how the ecclesiastical goods are to be administered is concerned, and confers on him, moreover, an executive function, whereby he is to give effect to the resolution which the office-bearers at large have seen fit to adopt.

But we see not in this that there is any unwarrantable stretching of the Deacon's office so as to make it embrace objects and powers inconsistent with, or beyond its scriptural design. For it should be observed, that there were two reasons for the institution of the Deaconship. The one may be said to have been more peculiarly the people's reason; and the other, that of the apostles. The people's reason was, that the widows might not be neglected in the daily ministration; and the

reason stated by the apostles was, that they might be enabled to give themselves more exclusively to their spiritual duties, and not to be compelled "to leave the Word of God, and serve tables." From the people's reason we gather, that one part of the secular business of the church was sought to be more effectually provided for by the appointment of Deacons, namely, that part which related to the supply of the wants of the poor; and from the apostles' reason we may conclude that the Deacons were to have to do with the whole matter of the daily ministration, and the service of tables; that is to say, with the management of the church's whole temporal affairs. The daily ministration and the service of tables cannot, we conceive, be viewed as having consisted merely in the relief of the poor, according to the usual acceptation of the word. At the time when the office of Deacon was introduced, the disciples of the Lord had all things common, and "as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to *every man* according as he had need." Acts 2: 44-46; 4: 32-37. "Every man" had his portion out of that common fund. The generous donors, who had placed in it the proceeds of the sale of their property, received theirs. The destitute widows had a title to theirs. So also had the apostles themselves. And out of that same fund must all payments have been made which were connected with the dispensation of the ordinances of Christ. It is highly reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that the service of tables and the daily ministration embraced all the ordinary disbursements of the church, and its whole temporal business; and that the appointment of Deacons was resorted to for the purpose of lightening the burden of the apostles, in respect of the entire class of secular duties, that their minds might be left more free and undisturbed for the exercise of prayer, and the ministry of the Word. "Duties of a secular nature," the apostles substantially said, "however important these duties may be, cannot be allowed to interfere with the due exercise of the spiritual functions which we are called to perform; and when the care of the temporal concerns of the church becomes so weighty and engrossing as to be incompatible with the charge of men's souls and the preaching of the gospel, it is essential to have other office-bearers through whom we may obtain the requisite relief, and on whom the main burden of the outward business of the sanctuary may be devolved."

In conformity with this view, and, doubtless, on such grounds as have been stated, the Second Book of Discipline says of the Deacons,—“Their office and power is to receive, and to distribute the haill ecclesiastical goods unto them to whom they



are appointed." True, it is immediately added—"This they ought to do according to the judgment and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships, *of the which the Deacons are not,*" &c. ; and this may be reckoned scarcely compatible with the Act of Assembly which gives the Deacon the very same vote and authority in disposing of the congregational funds, as it gives to the Elder or the Minister. We think, however, that the power of regulation here assigned to the presbyteries of the church, where the Deacons have no seats, may be rather regarded as analogous to the power exercised by the commissioners of Presbyteries in General Assembly convened, when they regulate, either directly, or through their committees, the sustentation of ministers, or when they pass an act, as they did in the present case, specifying the purposes to which the church funds are to be applied, and laying down the rules of secular administration ; and, at all events, we are satisfied that a more rigid construction of the Second Book of Discipline would be less in accordance with the lessons which Scripture precedent affords us.

The second objection which is taken against the Assembly's Act is, that too much power is given to the Elders. It may appear a little strange that the same law should be liable to objections which thus conflict with each other. Yet so it is. While, on the one hand, there are, as we have seen, plausible (although not solid) grounds for alleging that it stretches unwarrantably the office of Deacon, and gives power to that office-bearer beyond what the original institution did ; on the other hand it can be maintained, and with some show of reason, that the Act errs in that very particular with regard to the office of the Elder, and sends him out of his province to exercise authority in the Deacon's department. Why, it may be asked, should we not now, in this time of reform, confine the Elder entirely to those spiritual duties which are so important, and have been heretofore so much neglected, and leave the business of the Deacon's Court to be performed exclusively by those who have no higher and holier work assigned them ? There is a seeming force in the question. It is not unfair to call upon us to vindicate the arrangement which vests the administration of the secular affairs of the church, not in the Deacons alone, but in all the congregational office-bearers together. We are bound, in fact, to show that the Pastors and Elders of the church can *lawfully* be associated with the Deacons, in the charge and allocation of ecclesiastical funds.

Our argument shall be short. Four steps will bring us to the end of it. The *first* step is, that the greater office always includes the less. This is not a principle in the state, but it is a well-known and acknowledged principle in the Christian

church. The meaning of it is, that the appropriate functions of the Deacon are competent to the Elder, and those of the Deacon and of the Elder to the Pastor,—in other words, that the Elder, *because* he is an Elder, is also a Deacon; and the Pastor, *because* he is a Pastor, is also an Elder and a Deacon. The superior office-bearer may not always exercise the powers of the inferior one, but he is always capable of doing so, and will exercise them, if need be. Hence, the Pastors of the church are spoken of, not only as teachers, but as rulers of the flock; that is to say, the special function of the Eldership belongs to them. Heb. 13: 7, 17. Hence, also, Peter says, “The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder.” 1 Pet. 5: 1. And hence, in fine, the apostles of our Lord were Pastors, and Elders, and Deacons, in the church. They were Pastors; for they fed the flock. They were Elders; for they ruled it. And they were Deacons; for the whole secular business of the church was performed by them, until the time of the appointment of the seven. From all this we may infer, at the very least, that, where there are no Deacons, it is competent and proper for the other office-bearers to take the necessary oversight of the church’s temporal affairs.

The *second* step in the argument is, that *after* a separate order of men had been appointed as Deacons, the higher office-bearers continued to take some charge of the secular concerns of the church. When Paul received the right hand of fellowship from the other apostles, and it was settled that he should labor in the Gentile field, we are told that a stipulation was made, to which he most cordially acceded. “Only they would,” he says, “that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” Gal. 2: 10. Thus the care of the poor was devolved upon Paul at the very beginning of his career, and he does not appear to have ever been released from it. Twice we find him to have undertaken a long journey to Jerusalem, expressly as the bearer of the offerings of the brethren, and for the purpose of ministering to the necessities of the saints. We read of the first of these occasions in Acts 11: 29, 30, 12: 25. In conjunction with Barnabas, he had diligently labored in word and doctrine at Antioch, for the space of a whole year. The Lord had vouchsafed large success to his servants. “A great number” had believed; “much people” had been added unto the Lord. The Church of Antioch was in a highly flourishing condition; and no reasonable doubt can be entertained that it had its full equipment of office-bearers,—not only Pastors, but Elders and Deacons. Yet when “the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea,” they “sent it to the Elders, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” Nor was

this done because Barnabas and Saul had other business which required their presence in Jerusalem. It is said, ch. 12: 25, that they "returned (to Antioch) from Jerusalem, *when they had fulfilled their ministry*," that is to say, when they had accomplished the errand on which the disciples of Antioch had sent them. The work of ministering to the saints was what they had to do: they did it and returned. It deserves notice, also, that the Church of Antioch sent their contributions "*to the elders*." They "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, and *sent it to the elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." We know that Deacons had been appointed at Jerusalem. It is a remarkable circumstance, therefore, and has an important bearing on the point now under discussion, that the Antioch offering was not sent to the Deacons, but to the Elders. Many years after, Paul went to Jerusalem a second time on a similar errand. Standing on his defence before Felix at Cesarea, he said, "After many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings," Acts 24: 17; and he previously declared, when writing to the Romans in the prospect of this visit,—"*Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints*." For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. When, therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." Rom. 15: 25, 26, 28. And how warmly the apostle entered into the business, and what eager charge he took of the collection, may be seen by turning to 1 Cor. 16: 1-4, and the 8th and 9th chapters of 2d Corinthians. We there find him rejoicing to receive the gift, and to take upon him the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 2 Cor. 8: 4, 19, 20. It appears also that Titus, an evangelist and pastor, was actively employed in the same matter of finance and Christian liberality. 2 Cor. 8: 6, 16-18, 23, 24; 9: 3-5.

Our *third* step in this argument is, that the conclusion which we have thus drawn from Scripture, is corroborated as a sound one by the circumstance of its having been adopted by the Reformers, and by them embodied in the Constitution of the Church of Scotland. Take the following extracts in support of our assertion.

"The office of Deacons is to receive the rents, and gather the alms of the kirk, to keep and distribute the same, *as by the Ministers and Kirk shall be appointed*. They may also assist in judgment with the Ministers and Elders," &c. *First Book of Discipline*, ch. x. § 11. If it be held that the latter clause refers to the spiritual deliberations of the session, then we say that, *a fortiori*, the Deacons may assist the session in judgment, when the temporal concerns of the church are before them;



and, in such a case, have we not just the Deacons' Court, as defined by the Act of last Assembly?

"The office of Deacons is to gather and distribute the alms of the poor, *according to the direction of its session*. The Deacons should assist the assembly (*i. e.* the session) in judgment, and may read publicly if need requires."—*Ane short Somme of the Buik of Discipline*.

"The receivers and collectors of these rents and duties must be Deacons or Treasurers, appointed from year to year in every Kirk;—the Deacons must distribute no part of that which is collected, *but by command of the Ministers and Elders*; and they may command nothing to be delivered, but as the Kirk hath before determined," &c.—*First Book of Discipline*, ch. viii. § 8.

"If any extraordinary sums be to be delivered, *then must the Ministers, Elders and Deacons consult*, whether the deliverance of such sums doth stand with the common utility of the Kirk or not, and if they do universally condescend and agree upon the affirmative or negative, then—they may do as best seems; but if there be any controversy among themselves, the whole Kirk must be made privy; and that the matter be proponed, and the reasons, the judgment of the Kirk, with the Minister's consent, shall prevail."—*First Book of Discipline*, ch. viii. § 9. What have we here but the Deacons' Court again?

"Their office and power is to receive and to distribute the haill ecclesiastical goods, unto them to whom they are appointed. This they ought to do according to the judgment and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships," &c.—*Second Book of Discipline*, ch. viii. § 3.

"For officers in a single congregation, there ought to be one at the least, both to labor in the word and doctrine, and to rule" (that is, there must be a Pastor). "It is also requisite that there should be others to join in government" (that is, there must be Elders). "And likewise, it is requisite, that there be others to take special care for the relief of the poor" (that is, there must be Deacons). "*These officers are to meet together* at convenient and set times, for the well-ordering of the affairs of that congregation, each according to his office" (that is, there must be a Deacons' Court, consisting of Pastor, Elders, and Deacons). "It is most expedient that, *in these meetings*, one whose office is to labor in the word and doctrine do moderate in their proceedings" (that is, the Pastor should preside in the Deacons' Court).—*Form of Presbyterian Church Government, agreed upon at Westminster, and ratified by Act of Assembly, 1645*.

The fourth and final step in the argument is. that as it is now manifestly *competent*, both on scriptural and constitutional



grounds, that the superior office-bearers of the church should assist in administering her temporal affairs, so it is expedient and necessary, in present circumstances, that their right and power to act in conjunction with the Deacons should be recognized, and the exercise thereof provided for and regulated by the church. A moment's consideration will show this. Previous to the Disruption, the temporalities of the church were chiefly administered by the civil courts. The whole of her property was in their hands. The amount of stipends was fixed by them. They decided, in the last resort, as to the repair and building of manses, of places of worship, and in every question as to schools. Now, all is changed. All these matters are in the church's hands. And they are matters of great importance, although secular in their nature. The wrong adjustment of them would be hurtful to the highest interests of religion. To arrange and settle them in a proper manner often requires weight of character—always wisdom, experience, and knowledge of men and things. Plainly, then, it would be gross infatuation not to call in the aid of the Elders in regard to them. In many of our country congregations the temporal affairs of the church would go to wreck, if the Minister and Elders were to let them alone; and in all our congregations it would be extremely injudicious not to take the benefit of the services of the Elders, who always comprehend a large proportion of the gravest, the most sagacious, and the most influential of our members. If, indeed, it were unlawful to give the Elders any voice as to secular things, no expediency, however urgent, could warrant the church in doing it. But it is not unlawful. Scripture authorizes it. The constitution requires it. We think the Act of the late Assembly, on this subject, not only suited to the position of the church, but sound in the principle on which it proceeds. It gives the Elder no more power than belongs to him by the Word of God, and our ancient laws. And, if it is fairly and patiently wrought, we anticipate the best results.

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#### NOTE B.

*Proofs that the Laity were in primitive times represented in all the Councils of the Church by delegates of their appointment.*

We are happy to present the following elaborate testimony as collated by the Rev. Thomas John Young, of John's Island, South Carolina:

The primitive Councils were composed of the Clergy and Laity. The first Council of which we have any account, was that held for the election of a successor to the traitor Judas.

(Acts 1: 15.) It was evidently composed of the Clergy and Laity."\* The next Council, if it may be called a Council, was Laity. "The number of names together were about *an hundred and twenty.*"† The next Council, if it may be called a Council, was for the choice of Deacons. (Acts 6: 2, &c.) "The multitude of the Disciples" elected, and the Apostles ordained. The third and last Council mentioned in Scripture, (for I cannot consider the meeting of St. Paul with St. James and the Elders of Jerusalem, related in Acts 21, as a Council of the Church,) is that of which we have an account in Acts 15. Here, too, we find the Clergy and Laity assembled and deciding upon the questions proposed for consideration. For although in the 6th verse, the Apostles and Elders only are mentioned as "coming together," yet what follows, teaches us that the Laity were there also, and consenting to that which was determined upon. In the 12th verse it is said "*all the multitude kept silence.*" In the 22d verse, "Then pleased it the Apostles and Elders, *with the whole Church.*" And in the 23d verse, the letters go forth with the superscription, "*the Apostles, and Elders, and Brethren* send greeting." So much for the Councils of which mention is made in the word of God.

In noticing the succeeding Councils, we must distinguish the different kinds which were held; for it is only with *one* of them that we are now concerned. There were General or Œcumenical Councils, Patriarchal or Diocesan, Provincial and Consistorial Synods.

Whether any other than Bishops or their proxies *voted* in the General Councils has not been decided. If we take the Council of Nice, the first General Council, as an example, it is certain, according to Eusebius and Socrates, that Presbyters, Deacons and Laics were present and took part in the discussions.† The probability is that they also voted. But granting that they did not; then the Bishops may be considered as representing the Clergy, and the Emperor, without whose decree

\*Supposing that the whole number of the seventy disciples were present, these, with the eleven Apostles, would make but 81 of the 120. There must have been, then, at least 39 of the Laity present.

†"But in this present quire there was a multitude of Bishops, which exceeded the number of 250. But the number of the *Presbyters and Deacons* who followed them, of the Acoluthi, and of *many other persons*, was not to be comprehended." Eus. Ec. His. lib. iii. c. 8. Eng. Trans.

"There were also present a great many *Laics*, well skilled in logic, ready to assist, each their own party." \* \* \* "Against these [the patrons of Arius's opinions,] Athanasius, who was then but a *Deacon* of the Church of Alexandria, contended vigorously." Socrates Ec. His. lib. i. c. 8. Eng. Trans.

In the General Council of Constantinople three Presbyters subscribe among the Bishops. See Con. Constant. Tom. p. 297. Bingham lib. ii. c. 19, § 13, says that Habertas gives several other instances out of the Council of Chalcedon, 2d of Nice, 8th Council, against Photius and others. See also Jewel's Apology, c. vi. § 12.

the acts of General Councils were not binding, as representing the Laity.‡

That others, besides Bishops, sat and voted in Patriarchal and Provincial Synods, (the latter corresponding to our General Convention,) is demonstrable from ancient history and the acts of those Synods.\* The evidence for which, it is not necessary to cite, as our concern is with a still lower Council, corresponding to our Diocesan Conventions. As, however, our Conventions, whether General or Diocesan, are formed on the

‡See Barrow. Pop. Supremacy. Supposition vi. § 3, page 200, edition A. D. 1700.

\*"Upon this account [the Novatian schism] a very great Synod was assembled at Rome, consisting of sixty Bishops; but of *Presbyters* and *Deacons* the number was greater." A. D. 251. Eus. Ec. Hist. lib. vi. c. 43. Eng. Trans.

"These men [referring to some who had been carried away by the Novatian schism, but were now returning to the Church] \* \* divulged all his subtle devices and villanies \* \* in the presence both of a sufficient number of Bishops, and also of a great many *Presbyters* and *Laics*." Com. Ep. ad Fab. Eus. Ec. H. lib. vi. c. 43. Eng. Trans.

At the Council of Antioch. held A. D. 269 or 270, *Presbyters*, *Deacons* and *Laics* were present. Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 28, after mentioning the names of several of the Bishops, says, "and a great many more may be reckoned; who together with *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, were convened in the aforesaid city, &c. &c." The Circular letter of that Council runs in the name of certain Bishops and *Presbyters*, (whose name are given,) and of "all the rest of the Bishops of the neighboring cities and provinces which are with us, the *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, and the *Churches of God*." Eus. Ec. Hist. lib. vii. c. 30.

"We ought to take notice," says Valesius, in a note on the above passage, "of the inscription of this Epistle: For we find here, not the names of Bishops only, but also of *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, and of the *Laity* also. The same we may see in the acts of the Council of Carthage [A. D. 256], in which Cyprian was President, and in the Council of Eliberis" [A. D. 305].

Council of Eliberis, A. D. 305. "Residentibus etiam 36 (al 26) *Presbyteris*, adstantibus *Diaconibus* et omni plebe." Con. Elib. Proëm.

Council of Arles, A. D. 314. In the Imperial rescript, by which Constantine summoned Chrestus, Bishop of Syracuse, to this Council, we find the following:

"Ευζεύξας σεαυτῷ καὶ δύο γέ τινας τῶν ἐκ τοῦ δευτέρου θρόνου" associating with you two of the *second throne* [or order]. Eus. Ec. Hist. lib. x. c. 5.

The names of most of the Bishops who attended the Council of Arles are lost, as well as many of those of the *Prtsbyters*; "yet the names of 15 *Presbyters* are yet remaining." Bingham lib. ii. c. 19, § 12. Con. Arelat. i. in catalogo eorum consilio interfuerunt.

Council at Rome, under Hilary, A. D. 465. "Residentibus etiam UNIVERIS *Presbyteris*, adstantibus quoque *Diaconis*, &c., &c." Con. Rom. ap. Justel. Tom. i. page 250.

Council at Rome, under Felix, A. D. 487. The names of seventy-six *Presbyters* are mentioned that sat together with the Bishops in Council, the *Deacons* standing by them, &c. Con. Rom. ap. Justel. Tom. i., p. 255.

Council at Rome, under Symmachus, A. D. 499. Sixty-seven *Presbyters* and six *Deacons* subscribed in the very same form of words as the Bishops did. "Subscripserunt Presbyteri numero 67. Cælius Laurentius Archiepiscopus tituli Prædixis hic subscripsi et concensi Synodaliibus constitutis, atque in hac me profiteor manere sententia," &c. Con. Rom. ap. Justel. Tom. I., p. 259.

Council at Rome, under Symmachus, A. D. 502. Thirty-six *Presbyters* are named. "Residentibus etiam *Presbyteris*, Projectitio, Martino, &c. Adstantibus quoque *Diaconis*, &c. Con. Rom. ap. Just. Tom. i., p. 261.

Council at Bracara, A. D. 563. "Considentibus simul Episcopis, præsentibus



model of the Convocation of the Church in England, it will be well, in this stage of our argument, to inquire how that body was constituted.

It was divided into two houses. The upper house, prior to the Reformation, was composed of Bishops, Spiritual Vicars of absent Bishops, Custodes Spirituales of vacant Bishoprics, Abbots and Priors. The lower house, of Deans, Archdeacons, a Proctor for each Chapter, a Proctor for each Convent, and two Proctors for all the Clergy (*totumque Clerum*) in each Diocese.\* After the Reformation, the upper house was composed of the Bishops; and the lower house of the Deans, Archdeacons, a Proctor for every Chapter, and two Proctors for the Clergy of every Diocese. Here all the Clergy of every grade were represented; and the Laity exercised their suffrage, not in the Convocation, but through the Parliament; for no act of the Convocation was binding on the whole Church, until confirmed by an act of Parliament, or by the King.

*bus quoque Presbyteris, adstantibusque ministris vel universo Clero.*" Con. Bracar. i.

Council at Toledo, A. D. 589. "Convenientibus Episcopis in Ecclesia; considentibus *Presbyteris*, adstantibus Diaconis," &c. Con. Tolet, i.

In the Appendix to Chidley's edition of Jewel's Apology, I find the "ancient form for holding Church Councils." "It is given by Isidore, and from him by Hardouin." I subjoin an extract from it.

"The order according to which the sacred Synod should be held in the name of God.

"At the first hour of the day, before sunrise, let all be cast out of the church; and the entrance being barred, let all the door-keepers stand at the one door, through which the Prelates are to enter. And let all the Bishops, assembling, go in together and take their seats according to the time of their consecration. When all the Bishops have come in, and taken their places, next let those *Presbyters* be summoned, whose admission the nature of the case in hand seems to warrant; and let no Deacon intrude himself among them. After this may be admitted the more eminent of the *Deacons*, whose presence is required by the regular form of proceedings. And a circle being made of the Bishops' seats, let the *Presbyters* sit down behind them; those, namely, whom the Metropolitan has selected to be his assessors, such, of course, as may act with him both in judging and pronouncing sentence. Let the *Deacons* stand in sight of the Bishops; then let the *Laity* also enter, who, by choice of the Council, have obtained the privilege of being there. Moreover, the notaries must also come in, as is directed by the regular forms for reading documents and taking notes. Then the doors being fastened, and the Prelates sitting in long silence, and lifting up their whole heart to the Lord, the Archdeacon shall say—"Pray ye!" and presently, &c., &c."

From the preceding testimony, taken together, it is evident that both the Clergy and Laity had no voice in Patriarchal and Provincial Synods. The principle which placed them there will appear in the course of the following remarks. The manner of their election, and the influence which they exercised in these Synods varied with the varying condition of the church, and with the views held at different periods and in different countries of the right of the governed in framing the laws by which they were to be affected.

\*See the King's writ to Archbishop Warham, for summoning a Convocation; and the Archbishop's writ to the Bishop of London for the same purpose. Records iii. and iv. Burnet's Hist. Ref. See also Addenda i. same work.



We are now prepared to consider the fourth kind of Councils—the Consistorial or Diocesan.

By a Diocesan Council or Convention, I mean that body, to which, with the Bishop, is intrusted the conduct of the principal affairs of a Diocese; and these affairs, I contend, were managed by the Bishop, the whole Clergy, and the Laity. These two last being always distinguished from each other, and acting personally, or by their representatives.

It is a common maxim, drawn from the opinions of the Fathers, that "*quid at omnes pertinet, omnium consensu fieri debet*"—what concerns all should be done by the consent of all. Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, A. D. 251, in one of his Epistles to Cyprian, uses an expression very like this: "*Quid circa personam eorum observari deberet, consensu omnium statuere-tur.*"\* That which concerns their office should be determined by the consent of all. And by this principle, Cyprian, in his Epistle ad Clerum, declares his determination to abide: "That we might order and correct those things which the *common interest* demands concerning the government of the Church, they having been considered in a Council of very many. \* \* \* On my first entrance on my Bishopric, I determined to do nothing on my private judgment, *without your advice and the consent of the people*. But when, by the favor of God, I shall have come to you, *we will act together.*"† Such was his determination, and such his practice in very many instances.‡ It was the principle which prevailed in primitive times, and which, if now acted upon in this assembly, would gain all, and more than all that is contended for.

That the Church, that is, the Clergy and Laity, gave their suffrage in the choice of these their officers, in the time of the Apostles, is evident from the cases to which reference has already been made—the election of a successor to Judas, and the choice of the seven Deacons;—and none can read the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, without being convinced that the consent of the Church was necessary for the ordination of the Bishops and Deacons, whose qualifications for office are therein recorded. Of the practice of the Church in the ages succeed-

\*Cornelius Ep. 46 (al 49) ad Cyp. p. 92.

†Cyprian Ep. 6 (al 14) ad Clerum. "Ut ea quæ circa Ecclesiæ gubernaculum utilitas communis exposcit, tractare simul, et plurimorum consilio examinata limare possemus. \* \* Quando a primordio Episcopatus mei statuerim, nihil *sine consilio vostro* et *sine consensu plebis mea* privata sententia gerere: Sed cum ad vos per Dei gratium venero—in commune tractabimus.

‡See Cyp. Ep. 33 (al 38) ad Clerum. "In ordinationibus Clericis solemus vos ante consulere, et mores ac merita singulorum communi consilio ponderare." See also Ep. 24 (al 29) ad Cler.—also Ep. 34 ad Cler. "He would not," says Bingham. lib. ii. c. 19, § 8, "so much as ordain a sub-deacon, or reader, without their consent." See also Cyprian's Epistles, referred to and quoted by Barrow in his "Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy." Sup. v. § 10, page 159 of the folio Edition, A. D. 1700.

ing the Apostles, we take the testimony of Dr. Wall of the Church in England, whose knowledge of Christian antiquity none can question, and using his language, say, "That the primitive Church in the age next to the Apostles always made use of the suffrage of the people in the choice of their officers; not only of Deacons, but of their Presbyters, and especially of their Bishops. The Bishop of any Diocese appointed or ordained such Presbyters as the *people* by their general suffrage approved of: and when any Bishop died, the *Clergy of that Diocese with the consent of the people*, chose another, commonly one of their own body; and then some of the neighboring bishops came, and laying on hands, with public prayer, ordained him. And both these things, the *election of the Clergy and people*, and the ordination of some Bishop or Bishops, were counted essential to the being or right of a Bishop." \* \* \* \* "This," he adds, "was the usage and practice of the whole Greek and Latin Church for a thousand years and more, and that continued constantly without interruption, except two or three encroachments; such as in so long a space are found in the history of any law, rule or practice whatsoever, whether human or Divine."\*

The testimony of the Fathers and ancient Councils is conclusive on this point. This testimony is familiar, and I will not occupy time by citing more than two or three witnesses, unless the *fact* be disputed and the evidence called for.† Clement, A. D. 65, whose name St. Paul tells us was "written in the Book of Life," who conversed with and was instructed by the Apostles themselves, bears his testimony to the fact that the Clergy were chosen "*with the consent of the whole Church*."‡ Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, A. D. 250, in his Epis-

\*"Critical Remarks" upon some select passages of Scripture, published in 1730.

Dr. Barrow says, "The general practice was this: The neighbor Bishops (being advertised of a vacancy or want of a Bishop,) did convene at the place; then in the congregation, the *Clergy* of the place did *propound a person*, yielding their attestation to his fitness for the charge; which the *people* hearing, *did give their suffrages*, accepting him, if no weighty cause was objected against him; or refusing him if such cause did appear: Then upon their recommendation and acceptance, the Bishops present did adjoin their approbation and consent; then by their devotions and solemn laying on of their hands, they did ordain or consecrate him to the Function." Pop. Suprem. Sup. vi. § 6, p. 203 fol.

Again, he says, "We may, by the way, observe, that in the first times they [Roman Bishops,] had not so much as an absolute power of *ordaining a Presbyter* in the Church of his own city, *without leave of the Clergy and people*." Page 208, fol. ed. of 1700.

Bishop Bilson says, "In the Primitive Church the *people* did choose, name, elect and decree, as well as the *Clergy*." Perpet. Gov. Ch. c. 15.

Dr. Cave says, "At all ordinations, especially of superior officers, the *people* of the place were always present, and ratified the action with their approbation and consent." Prim. Christ. p. 240.

†Some of this evidence, for much of which I am indebted to Barrow, Bingham, Valerius, c. &c., will be found in the succeeding notes.

‡Clem. Rom. Ep. i. ad Cor. § 44, Archbishop Wake's trans.

tle to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, incidentally mentions a fact which is perfectly conclusive. Something in the baptism of Novatian had been considered irregular. On this account he was "denied orders," says Cornelius, "by *all the Clergy and many of the Laity*," and "the Bishop *entreated* license might be granted him to ordain that one person."§ We have the testimony, to the same effect, of Origen, A. D. 230,\*\* Cyprian, A. D. 250,†† Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 370,‡‡ Ambrose, A. D. 374,\* Jerome, A. D. 378,§§ Ciricius, A. D. 385,\*\*\* Theodoret, A. D. 423,\*† Celestin, A. D. 423,\*§ Socrates, A. D. 439,§†

§Cor. ad. Fab. Euseb. lib. vi. c. 43. "Τὸ πᾶντὸς τοῦ κλήρου, ἅλλα καὶ λαϊκῶν πολλῶν."

\*\*Origen in the close of his last book against Celsus, speaking expressly of the constitution of Churches or cities of God, affirms of the rulers of the Church, that they are "εκλεγόμενοι, chosen to their office by the Churches which they rule."

††Ep. 52 (al 55). "Factus est autem Cornelius Episcopus de Dei et Christi ejus judicio, de Clericorum pene omnium testimonio, de Plebis, quæ tunc adfuit, suffragio." Cornelius was made bishop by the judgment of God and his Christ, by the testimony of almost all the Clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were then present.

Ep. 68 (al 67) ad frat. Hispan. "Ordinatio justa et legitima, quæ omnium suffragio et judicio fuerit examinata." That ordination is just and lawful which shall have been determined by the suffrage and sentence of all.

Ep. 68. A. D. 257, in the name of the African Synod. "Plebs ipsa maxime habent protestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi." The people have the power either of choosing worthy priests, or of rejecting those who are unworthy.

‡‡Gregory Nazianzen commends the election of Athanasius as being after "the example of the Apostles because he was chosen. —by the suffrage of all the people. Gr. Naz. Orat. 21.

Speaking, in his life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, of Carbonarius, Bishop of Comana, he says that "although pointed out by special Divine revelation, yet before he was ordained he was unanimously chosen by the whole Church." Tom. 3, p. 502.

\*Ep. 82. "Electio et vocatio quæ fit a tota Ecclesia vere et certe est Divina vocatio ad munus Episcopi." The election and calling which is made by the whole church, is truly and certainly a Divine call to the office of a Bishop.

Amb. Com. in Luc. lib. viii. c. 17, addressing the people of Milan says—"Vos enim mihi estis Parentes, qui sacerdotium detulistis: Vos. inquam, Filii vel Parentes; Filii singuli, universi Parentes." Ye are my Fathers who chose me to be Bishop: Ye, I say, are both my children and Fathers; Children in particular, Fathers all together.

§§In Ezek. lib. x. c. 33. "Speculator Ecclesiæ, vel Episcopus vel Presbyter, qui a Populo electus est." The watchman of the Church, either a Bishop or a Presbyter, who was chosen by the people."

\*\*\*Ep. i. ad. Himer. Tarracon. c. 10. "Presbyterium vel Episcopatum, si eum Cleri ac Plebis evocaverit electio, non immerito societur." If the election of the Clergy and people shall have called him to the Presbytership or Episcopate, he is deservedly associated.

\*†Lib. i. c. 7. He says of Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, "ψήφω κοινῇ κατηνάγκασαν ἄρχιερεῖς τε καὶ ἱερεῖς καὶ ἅτας δ λαός." Both the Chief Priests [Bishops] and Priests and all the people compelled him by a common suffrage.

\*§Ep. 2. c. 5. "Nullus invitis detur Episcopus. Cleri, plebis, et ordinis consensus et desiderium requiratur." Let no Bishop be given to the unwilling. The consent and desire of the Clergy and people is to be required.

§†Lib. vi. c. 2. He says that Chrysostom was chosen ψηφίσματι κοι-



Sozomen, A. D. 440,† Leo Magnus, A. D. 440.‡ This last, after stating the Church's rule, lays down also the principle on which it was based:—"Qui *praefuturus est omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur.*"—He who is to preside over all, should be chosen by all.

The Councils of Carthage, under Cyprian, A. D. 256.\* Nice, A. D. 325,§ Antioch, A. D. 341,\*\* Alexandria, A. D. 361 or 362,†† 3d of Carthage, A. D. 397,‡‡ 4th of Carthage, A. D.

νό δμοῦ πάντων, κλήρου τε καὶ λαοῦ—by the common vote of all, both *Clergy and Laity*.

†Sozomen speaking of Chrysostom, says, "The *people and Clergy* having voted it, the Emperor gave his consent."

‡Ep. 84 ad Anast. c. 5. "Cum de summi Sacerdotis electione tractabitur, ille omnibus praepōnatur, quem *Cleri Plebisque consensus* concorditer postularit; ita ut si in aliam forte personam partium se vota dividerint, Metropolitanū iudicio is alteri praefertatur qui majoribus et studiis juvatur et meritis," &c. When it is to be determined concerning the election of a Bishop, let him be preferred to all, whom the *joint consent of the Clergy and people* shall have demanded; but if, by chance, the votes of the parties shall have been divided, he should be preferred, by the decision of the Metropolitan, who is supported by the *greater number of votes* and the higher merits," &c.

Ep. 89 ad Epis. Vien. "Expectarentur certe vota *civium*, testimonia *populorum*; quæreretur *honoratorum arbitrium*, electio *Clericorum*. Qui praefuturus est omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur." Certainly the votes of the *citizens*, the testimony of the *people* should have been waited for; the will of the *gentry*, the election of the *Clergy* should have been sought. *He that is to preside over all, should be chosen by all.*

\*Cyprian Ep. 68 (al 67) Synod. Ep. African. Synod. "*Plebs ipsa maxime habet potestatem vel eligendi dignos Sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.*" The *people* themselves chiefly have the power of choosing worthy Priests, or refusing the unworthy.

§Synod. Ep. Con. Nic. Soc. Ec. His. lib. i. c. 9. Eng. Trans. [Melitian Bishops] "shall have no power to *propose or nominate* whom they please."

"And if it shall happen that some of those who now hold ecclesiastical preferments die, then let those [Melitian Bishops, &c.]\*\*\*\* be preferred to the dignities of the deceased; provided that they shall appear worthy, and that *the people shall freely elect them*; provided also that the Bishop of Alexandria doth, by his suffrage, ratify and confirm [the people's election.]"

\*\*Calv. Instit. lib. iv. c. 4, § 11, says of this Council, "Hoc igitur in Concilio Antiocheno vetitum est, ne quis *invitis* ingeratur." This therefore is forbidden by the Council of Antioch, that any one should be forced upon those *unwilling to receive him*.

††Bingham, lib. iv. c. 2, § 11. "The Eusebian party made it an objection against him [Athanasius], that he had *not the choice of the people*: but the Bishops of Egypt assembled in Synod, in their Synodical Epistle do with great earnestness maintain the contrary, asserting that the *whole multitude* of the people of the Catholic Church, as if they had been all united in one soul and body, cried out requiring Athanasius to be ordained Bishop."

Ep. Synod. Council. Alex. ap. Athen. apol. 2, t. 2, p. 726. Πᾶς δ λαός—*ἀνεβόων, ἔκραζον, αἰτοῦντες Ἀθανάσιον ἐπίσκοπον.*

‡‡This Council decreed, "That no Clergyman be ordained, who has not been examined by the Bishops, and approved by the *suffrages of the people.*" Curries' Jus. pop. p. 306, 1733.



399, §§ Chalcedon, A. D. 451, \*† Arles, A. D. 452, \*\*\* Auvergne or Clermont, A. D. 535, \* 3d of Orleans, A. D. 538, † 5th of Orleans, A. D. 549, ‡ 3d of Paris, A. D. 559, § Barcelona, A. D. 599, \*\* 4th of Toledo, A. D. 633, †† 2d of Cabilone, A. D. 649, ‡‡

§§ Con. Car. 4, c. 1. "*Cum consensu Clericorum et Laicorum et conventu totius provinciae Episcoporum, maximeque Metropolitanorum vel auctoritate vel praesentia ordinetur Episcopus.*" A Bishop may be consecrated by the consent of the Clergy and Laity, and the agreement of the Bishops of the whole Province, and, especially by either the authority or presence of the Metropolitan.

Can. 22. "*Ut Episcopus sine consilio Clericorum suorum Clericos non ordinet; ita ut civium assensum et conniventiam et testimonium quærat.*" A Bishop may not ordain Clergymen without the consent of his Clergy; and he shall also obtain the assent, approbation and testimony of the citizens.

Con. Car. 4, c. 3. "*Presbyter cum ordinatur, Episcopo eum benedicente et manum super caput ejus tenente, etiam omnes Presbyteri, qui praesentes sunt, manus suas juxta manum Episcopi super caput illius teneant.*" When a Presbyter is ordained, the Bishop blessing him and holding his hand upon his head, let all the Presbyters also, who are present, hold their hands upon his head near the hand of the Bishop.

\*† Act. vi. This Council declares for the Ephesians having a Bishop chosen by all the flock whom he was to feed—"παρά πάντων τῶν μελλόντων ποιμανεῖσθαι ψηφισσόμενος."

Act xii. declares that a Bishop shall be settled by the election of all the flock to be fed—"ἐξ ἐπίλογης πάντων τῶν μελλόντων ποιμανεῖσθαι ψηφισσόμενον."

\*\*\* Con. Arelat. 2, c. 54. "*Placuit in ordinatione Episcopi hunc ordinem custodiri, ut tres ab Episcopis nominentur, de quibus Clerici vel Cives erga unum habeant eligendi potestatem.*" This order must be observed in the ordination of a Bishop. Three shall be nominated by the Bishops; one of whom the Clergy and citizens shall have the power of choosing.

\* This Council determined "that a Bishop should be raised omnium electione et non paucorum favore—by the election of all, and not by the favor of a few." Cur. Jus. pop. p. 310, 1733.

† Canon 3d determined "that the Bishops of the Province should be chosen by the Clergy and People;" assigning the reason, "*Qui praefuturus est omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur.*" He who is to preside over all, should be chosen by all.

‡ Canon xi. "*Sicut antiqui Canones decreverunt, nullus invitis Episcopus, sed nec per oppressionem potentium personarum ad consensum faciendum Cives aut Clerici, quod dici nefas est, inclinentur.*" As the ancient Canons have decreed, let no Bishop be given to those unwilling to receive him. Neither let the citizens or Clergy be influenced, which it is unlawful to say of any, to give their consent, by the oppression of great men.

§ Con. Par. 3. "*Et quia in aliquibus rebus, &c.*" "Because in some things the ancient custom is neglected, and the decrees of the Canons violated; it is thought good, according to the ancient custom, that the decrees of the Canons be observed, and that no Bishop be ordained [Civibus invitis] if the citizens be unwilling, nor unless he be heartily invited by the election of the people and Clergy, and by the command of the Prince, &c., &c." Cur. Jus. pop. p. 311, 1733.

\*\* Con. Barcinon. Can. 3. By the Canon it was decreed that the Clergy and Laity should nominate three, and that the Metropolitan and Provincial Bishops should cast lots which one of the three was to be ordained. Bingham. lib. iv. c. 2. § 17.

†† This Council decreed "that none should be esteemed a Bishop, but he that was chosen by the Clergy and people of the city." Cur. Jus. pop. p. 311, 1733.

‡‡ "*Si quis Episcopus de quacunque civitate defunctus &c.*" "If a Bishop in any city be removed by death, the election of another shall not be but by the neighboring Bishops, the Clergy and his own citizens; if otherwise, let his ordination be esteemed void." Cur. Jus. pop. p. 312.

3d Constantinople, A. D. 680,†† all testify the same; so that we may fearlessly lay down, as maxims of antiquity, the rules already quoted—“*Quid ad omnes pertinet, omnium consensu fieri debet;*” “*Qui præfuturus est omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur.*” I will not allow myself to suppose, even for a moment, that any here present will reject the sentiment expressed by the “judicious Hooker.” “For of this thing,” he says, “no man doubteth, namely, that in all Societies, Companies, and Corporations, what severally each shall be bound unto, it must be *with all their assents ratified*. Against all equity it were, that a man should suffer detriment at the hands of men, for not observing that which he never did, either by himself or others, mediately or immediately agree unto. \* \* \* \* In this case therefore especially, that vulgar axiom is of force: ‘*Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet.*’”‡‡ I cannot also but hope that our brethren of the Laity will agree to take the converse of the proposition laid down by Innocent, A. D. 402, quoted by the same Hooker—“*Sicut Laici jurisdictionem Clericorum perturbare, ita Clerici jurisdictionem Laicorum non debent minuere*”—and grant that as the Clergy ought not to abridge the jurisdiction of the Laity, so the Laity ought not to take away the rights of the Clergy. §§

††Of this Council, Calvin says, “Adeo autem caverunt sancti Patres, ne ullo pacto imminueretur hæc populi libertas, ut quum Synodus Universalis Constantinopoli congregata Nectorium ordinaret, id noluerit *sine totius Cleri et populi approbatione*, ut sua ad Synodum Romanum epistola testatum es.” The holy Fathers were so careful that this privilege of the people should in no degree be diminished, that when the universal Council assembled at Constantinople wished to ordain Nectorius, it could not be done *without the consent of all the Clergy and people*; as is testified by their own Epistle to the Roman Synod.

‡‡Ecc. Pol. bb. viii. p. 447, Dobson’s Edit. 1825.

§§It is interesting to trace the gradual decline of the fear of clerical influence in this Diocese.

In the Convention of 1804, it was determined that “on the business which should come before them, the Convention should vote by *Parishes*,” (Dalcho, p. 488;) consequently the Clerical vote was merged in the votes of the Laity; and if there were more than one Lay-Delegate from a Parish, the Clerical vote was worth nothing.

In 1806, the “Rules and Regulations, &c.” which form the basis of our present Constitution, were adopted. By Rule III. (Dalcho, p. 496,) “The officiating Clergy of the Prot. Ep. Churches of this State shall be deemed. *ex-officio*, members of this Convention.”

In 1807, it having been ascertained that under that Rule no Clergyman had a right to *vote* in Convention, (Dalcho, p. 500,) it was amended by adding “with a right to vote with the Lay Delegates, provided that such right shall not appertain to the officiating Clergyman of any particular Church, in cases where Lay-Delegates have not been appointed.” Here the Clerical vote was still merged in the Lay-vote; and where no Lay-Delegates were appointed the Clergyman had no vote.

In 1808, (Dalcho, p. 503,) the Vestry of St. Philip’s Church addressed a letter to the Convention declaring that they disagreed to the article giving the Clergy a right to vote. They instructed their Delegates to propose an amendment by adding the words “or shall not attend.” After considerable debate, the proposed amendment was rejected.

In 1809, (Dalcho, p. 507,) a further amendment was made giving the Clergy a right to vote, no Lay-Delegate attending, upon his producing a

## NOTE C.

*The tendency of Congregationalism.*

*Pure* Congregationalism we believe to be as impracticable in the church as a pure democracy in the state, and both to be subversive of all government and society, and a return to the condition of nature, or of families, which is the next thing to it. Congregationalism, *as it now exists*, has so far allied itself to the principles of Presbyterianism as to adopt practically many of the *essential* features of the system. But *pure* Congregationalism as it formerly existed, and as it now exists in some parts of England, must be either a monarchy or an anarchy. M. Beverly, Esquire, thinks that as found in England it is an ecclesiastical monarchy. "Certainly," he says,\* "we might on a lower ground embarrass the Congregational dissenters, by requesting them to explain the monarchical form of their ministerial government; for, whatever may be their opinions of the ministerial office, this is certain, that they cannot, and would not, endeavor to defend the monarchy of the ministry, by reference to the Scriptures, or even to the well-known records of the first and second centuries of church history. All the Congregational dissenters have, in practice, rejected the plurality of ministers, and have settled down into the monarchical form of government, without the pretence of an argument in favor of

certificate from the Vestry of his Church of his being authorized by them to do so.

In 1810, (Dalcho, p. 511,) the motion was renewed to prevent a Clergyman from voting when his Lay-Delegates were not present; and was postponed to the next Convention.

It appears that there was no meeting in 1811; and in 1812, (Dalcho, p. 516,) the motion was taken up, and indefinitely postponed. The article was then amended giving the Clergy "a right to vote on all matters requiring the suffrages" of the Convention.

In 1813, (Dalcho, p. 524,) it was determined that the Bishop should "always be, *ex-officio*, President of the Convention."

In 1814, (Dalcho, pp. 530 and 532,) the third rule was again amended, limiting the suffrage of the Clergy to matters not involving the temporal concerns of the Churches, except authorized to vote on those matters by their Churches.

In 1821, (page 21 of the Journal,) on a revision of the Rules, it was proposed to allow the vote by orders. This was lost, there not being a constitutional majority of two-thirds; 13 churches voting for, and 7 churches against it. In the same year Missionaries were allowed a seat in the house.

In 1824, (Journal, p. 19,) the Constitution was amended so as to *allow the vote by orders*. Thus giving a death-blow to long-existing prejudices and jealousies.

The extent to which this jealousy was formerly carried in this State was to reject altogether the office of Bishop (see the author's work on Presbyterian and Prelacy, p. 528 and 538) on account of its hierarchical despotism. Now the laity are crushed beneath the idol car of this dominant hierarchy, so that a Rector is forced to express rejoicing in the prostration of the laity and in his own permission to be even one of the "inferior clergy." As it is now it is idle to talk of the rights or power of the laity in the Episcopal church, since in a vote by orders of all the laity are opposed by a majority of the clergy they are overruled, and THE BISHOP can vote both.

\*Heresy of Human Priesthood, p. ii. and xii.



such an arrangement. Hence, they are endeavoring to circulate opinions favorable to a large increase of clerical power; which, if it should be successful, would place them in a higher position with regard to the laity, *than even the Presbyterian clergymen*; for the Presbyterian must submit to the decisions of his clerical brethren in general assembly and to his lay brethren in the session; but in the Congregational system, each church is independent, and therefore the Congregational clergymen would govern, unchecked by an appeal, in the convenient arrangement of an independent monarchy."

Such also is the view taken of the system in England, by the Rev. Mr. Cumming of London.† "Where the minister," he says, "is popular and able to fill his pews with plenty of seat-holders, he can, as he does generally, play the absolute despot. His deacons are his servants, and his members are his subjects. But where the minister is a man of moderate talents, as most men are, neither attractive nor popular, the case is wholly altered. Mr. Angel James's LORD DEACONS then start into power; church-meetings record their convictions of a "dying interest;" and the poor man is cashiered by the same democracy that called him into prominence. Such a man is not an *independent* minister; he is rather the minister of an *independent* congregation. This system is opposed alike to the word of God, the first principles of all social existence, and the interests of ministers and of people."

On the other hand the Plymouth brethren have set up the government of the brethren to the exclusion of any government by a pastorate or ministry. So that with them the laity are every thing and the ministry nothing.‡ Here we have ecclesiastical anarchy.

In pure Congregationalism, therefore we have unbounded *equality*, but not perfect *freedom*, since there are no intermediate bodies or powers to protect the people from the dominion of the pastor, or of any leader in the congregation; or on the other hand to protect the pastor from the anarchical ebullition of popular disaffection. The system of *pure* Congregationalism is therefore wholly unlike our republican or representative system. Whatever analogy may be found to it in any *single* congregation, there can be none discovered *in the system as a whole*. There is in it no principle of union, or confederation, no delegation of powers, no balance of responsibilities, and no mutual recognition of responsibility and co-operation; and AS A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT therefore, Congregationalism can have no resemblance whatever to a confederated government, which out of many bodies constitutes one; nor even to a state

†Apology for the Church of Scotland, p. 12.

‡Dr. Vaughan's Congreg. pp. 176, 177.



government, which implies the union of many townships and districts. It is in short NO SYSTEM of ecclesiastical government at all, but a number of ecclesiastical families living under one civil government, and by it held together, but having no ecclesiastical existence as a body, except so far as it adopts practically the essential principles of a presbyterial or confederated government.





# Theories of the Eldership

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# THEORIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.

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## ARTICLE I.—*Theories of the Eldership*.\*

It is not intended in the present discussion to raise the question of the scriptural warrant of ruling elders in the church of Christ, nor any quarrel about the propriety of the designation—ruling elders—in the *general* meaning of both terms—as happily descriptive of their official dignity and office as the representatives of the Christian people, and assessors with the Christian ministry in the government of the church. But as names are things, and principles precede and prepare for practical results, it is, we think, of great importance to have it clearly understood and definitively established that the name of ruling elder is applicable only in the general, and not in the official sense affixed to it in the New Testament and by the early church, and indeed by the church universally until long after the Reformation; and that the true basis and authority of these official representatives of the people are to be found in other terms contained in the only recognized constitutional code of doctrine, order, and officers in the church of God.

"It is a disreputable truth," says Dr. Thornwell, "that there are many Presbyterians and Presbyterian ministers who are very imperfectly acquainted with the characteristic principles of their own system," and that it "is still disputed whether he (the ruling elder) is the proxy of the congregation, deriving all his rights and authority from a delegation of power on the part of the people, or whether he is an officer divinely appointed, deriving his authority from Christ the Lord. It is still disputed whether he belongs to the same order with the minister, or whether the minister alone is the presbyter of Scripture, and the ruling elder a subordinate assistant. It is still disputed whether he sits in Presbytery as the deputy of the brotherhood, or whether he sits there by divine right as a constituent element of the body; whether, as a member of Presbytery, he can participate in all Presbyterial acts, or is debarred from

\*As it is designed to make this a constitutional argument, it will be necessary to review all the works on the subject of ruling powers, from Dr. Miller's work to the present time, including the separate works of Dr. Wilson, Dr. King, McKerrow, Lorimer, Guthrie, and Robinson's Church of God, Dr. Addison Alexander's Primitive Offices, Dr. Breckinridge's Knowledge of God, vol. ii., Dr. Thornwell's Review of it, Dr. Adger's Inaugural Address, and Dr. Killen's Ancient Church. The nature of the argument will require the frequent exhibition of authoritative standards.

some by the low nature of his office.”\* *Southern Presbyterian Review*, 1859, p. 615.

To this “disreputable” diversity and “imperfect acquaintance with the characteristic principles of their own system,” Dr. Thornwell opposes what he approves and commends to Presbyterians as “indisputable”—the theory of Dr. Breckinridge—which with characteristic powers of analysis he thus sums up: “That all government is by councils; that these councils are representative and deliberative; that *jure Divino* they are all Presbyteries, and as Presbyteries composed exclusively of presbyters; that presbyters, *though one in order, and the right to rule, are subdivided into two classes*; that all Presbyteries, whether parochial, classical, or synodical, are radically the same; that the church in its germ, and in its fullest development, presents the same elements; that her whole polity is that of a free commonwealth,” in which the ruling elder can participate in ALL Presbyterian acts, including, of course, ordination, imposition of hands, &c.

But is this theory—*novel* so far as it is different from the established doctrine and practice of Presbyterian churches—an Irenicum, or an apple of discord? Even as a philosophical analysis it seems to us imperfect; for surely, in the last analysis, preaching the glad tidings of a glorious gospel is the chief end and characteristic of the church, as God’s instrumental agency for the salvation of lost sinners. Preaching and preachers, and not ruling and rulers, must be the ultimate characteristic of that church which is the pillar and ground of the truth, and through which the manifold wisdom of God is made known unto principalities and powers in heavenly places. Neither does this theory give us a faultless classification or a real unity. A *class* is more general than an *order*, and includes it; and since they are distinguished from each other by constant forms of diversity, two *classes* or *orders* of officers cannot make *one order*. Besides, our Constitution, and that of probably every other Presbyterian church recognizes a third class or order of officers—DEACONS. These are united with the others in the oversight, ministration, and even government of the church within their sphere—that is, the management of the temporalities and charities of congregations. In the early Christian church, and in the church of Scotland, deacons actively united in the distribution of the elements in the Lord’s Supper. In the First Book of Discipline they are spoken of as with elders having authority to judge in the kirk of God, and, like them, were elected “every year once.” “One of the seniors and one of the deacons once in

\*To this *argumentum ad invidiam* we may at once reply, that no office in the church of God can be *low*, and that Israel’s greatest king would rather be a door-keeper in the house of God than be a ruler or an heir presumptive among the ungodly.

the year notified the life, manners, study, and diligence of the minister," &c. "They may also assist in judgment with the minister and elders, and may be admitted to read in the assembly if they be required, and be able thereto." The "Deacons' Court" is now a fundamental part of the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland, the members of which are—1. the minister or ministers of the congregation; 2. the elders; and 3. the deacons. According to the theory of the Presbyterian church, the greater office includes the less. The minister and elders can therefore be deacons, and can sit and act as members of this court. All the members are thus deacons, and have equal rights, and hence the appropriateness of the name—the "Court of Deacons."\*

Now, in the analysis given us of this theory so "ably, scripturally, and unanswerably established" by Dr. Breckinridge, the existence of such officers as "a characteristic principle of the Presbyterian system" is ignored as *one* of the three "ordinary and perpetual officers in the church."

To reduce our system to a philosophical unity, we must therefore generalize the officers of the church, so as by the omission of specific differences of order, to make one class for the united government and oversight of the churches. This is the unity to which the Presbyterian polity was reduced by the Second Book of Discipline in 1578. "The whole policy of the kirk consisteth in three things, viz. in doctrine, discipline, and distribution. With doctrine is annexed the administration of sacraments, and according to the parts of this division arises a three-fold sort of office-bearers in the kirk, to wit, of ministers or preachers, elders or governors, and deacons or distributors; and all these may be called by one general word—ministers of the kirk." But we may also arrive at a unity still more suggestive of the propriety of our Presbyterian name, by referring it at once to our doctrine concerning the presbyter, or, to use the language of the same Book, of "pastors, bishops, or ministers who are appointed to particular congregations, which they rule by the word of God, and over which they watch—in respect whereof sometime they are called pastors—sometime *episcopi* or bishops—sometimes ministers—and sometimes also presbyters or seniors." By their belief in this one and only order of ministers, Presbyterians are characteristically distinguished

\*Forbes' Digest, pp. 8, 9. It is added in a note: "It must never be forgotten that the elders are also deacons." The Rev. Stuart Robinson speaks of the office of deacons as a power of government in the church for accomplishing its design in "the provision for and care of the revenues of the community." (See "Church of God," pp. 89 and 120.) We will have more to say on this subject however hereafter, and on no subject does our church require more quickening than on the true nature, relations, and functions of deacons. Dr. Breckinridge, however, if reported aright in the Assembly, seemed to attribute to them independent sovereign rule in their sphere, while he ignores them as rulers. This is an extreme.



from those churches which believe in an order of ordained ministers higher than presbyters, to whom is restricted, by divine right, the exclusive power of ordination and jurisdiction in the church. According to the Presbyterian church, the presbyter is the only order of permanent ministers in the church—the only order ordained by imposition of the hands of the Presbytery—the only order clothed with the power of ordination by imposition of hands—the only authorized administrators of the sacraments, and public teachers of doctrine; and an order which being, as our standards declare, “the first in the church both for dignity and usefulness,” contains within itself both the eldership and the deaconship, and may therefore properly be taken as the representative of all. And that this is the true exposition of our modern denominational title, there is, as we will show, satisfactory evidence.

Let this however be as it may, the theory propounded by Dr. Thornwell as “ably, scripturally, and unanswerably established” by Dr. Breckinridge, has not relieved *even its friends* from the “disreputable charge of being ignorant of the characteristic principles of their own system,” and cannot therefore be satisfactory *to us*. In the previous number of the same *Review*, in which Dr. Thornwell announces this theory, Dr. Adger proclaims the one which, as professor in the same Theological Seminary, he maintains. Says he: \* “The other view, and *I think the true view* of the nature of this office, makes the ruling elder to be the *aboriginal* presbyter, and makes the *essence* of the Presbyterate to be *ruling*. It makes the overseers or bishops of the church at Ephesus, whom Paul summoned to Miletus, to be ruling elders. It makes the description which Paul gives to Timothy of the bishop, relate to the ruling elder. It makes those whom Titus ordained in every city, ruling elders, in distinction from teaching elders. It denies that presbyter and preacher were originally synonymous; but views preaching as a function—a *charisma* (or gift,) as Neander expresses it, which came to be superadded to certain of the rulers. They had suitable talents, and so were chosen and called to that work.” Dr. Adger therefore simplifies the analysis by denying “one order subdivided into two classes,” and by rejecting altogether any *office* or order of the ministry of the word and sacraments to be of divine institution, and admits only the *work* or *function* of the ministry by such presbyters as are *gifted* for it. The ministry, therefore, is not a permanent divine office, having spiritual relation to the whole employment of the ministry, in a person qualified and specially called and ordained thereto, but a *work* performed by those who

\*Inaugural Discourse on Church History, &c., in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for 1859, p. 171.

were ruling elders—"a function, a *charisma* or gift, which comes to be superadded to certain of the rulers," as Neander thought was the case—only, however, in the very beginning of Christianity.\* This is a very simple theory, and very confidently set forth by Dr. Adger. "Beginning," says he, "with the elders of Israel, in the days of Moses, and coming down to the elders of the synagogue, after the return from Babylon; and thence still further descending to the elders, or presbyters, or bishops, or pastors of the New Testament, this view finds them always to be *rulers*, in distinction from *teachers*. And scrutinizing carefully the testimonies of the apostolic Fathers also, and of the primitive church, this view finds the presbyter, or the elder in the early church, to be simply a ruler and a shepherd of Christ's flock." "Paul says that a bishop (or ruling elder) must be 'apt to teach,' but not because the duty of public instruction belongs to him officially. He teaches indeed from house to house, . . . yet he is not himself a teacher, but simply a ruler in God's house." Again Dr. Adger says:

"In their own congregations, many elders there are whom the people respect as good citizens; industrious, honest men; kind neighbours and pious Christians; but they get none of the respect which is demanded by the high spiritual office they wear. The reason is, that the elder himself is not sensible that 'the Holy Ghost hath made him an overseer over the flock, to feed the church of God;' and, accordingly, he does not go about, as he ought, both with and without the minister, 'from house to house, warning every one night and day with tears.' The people do not have the remotest conception that he is a pastor of the flock, because there is no visitation or other pastoralship of the flock by him. I have heard it said, that in the old country the children look on the visit of the elder with the same reverential awe, and yet the same filial delight, as on the visit of the minister. *There*, he is a minister; he is a pastor; he is a bishop of souls." "He is a shepherd of the blood-bought flock." "When he (Christ) ascended up on high, he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists. These were extraordinary officers, that do not belong to a settled state of the church. Then he gave also, for ordinary officers, some pastors and teachers. I (that is, Dr. Adger) do not say the office of rule is superior, nor yet in every respect

\*Neander admits that *he was not able to say* "whether, in the appointment of presbyters, care was taken that only those who were furnished with the gift of teaching should be admitted into the college of presbyters. At a later period, as appears from Titus i. 9, he thinks "care was taken that overseers should be appointed who would be able, by their *public instructions*, to protect the church from the infection of false doctrine;" or in other words, the presbyters were all ministers and preachers.—See *History and Planting of Christianity*, vol. i.

even equal to that of instruction; *but I say*, the Holy Spirit here names it *first*: 'Some *pastors*, (i. e. *ruling elders*,) and (or *then*) teachers.' "

We have brought these passages together from the same article, because "extreme cases prove principles," and the theory we are considering is here presented in its plain and legitimate development.

Dr. Adger, however, is not alone in such conclusions. Dr. Thompson, of Buffalo, New York, in his opening discourse before the last General Assembly of the New-School Body, "denied," as reported in the *New York Observer*, "the propriety of the distinction which exists between clergy and elders, and declared that even if church law made such a distinction, the law of the Scriptures did not support the law of the church. The Scriptures know of no distinction in the office of elder, but all elders are bishops. A minister is an elder to labour in word and doctrine; an elder is a bishop called from word and doctrine to labour in the government and oversight of the church. Having defined the bishop's office in this comprehensive manner, the preacher devoted the remainder of his discourse to a presentation of the bishop's good work."

Dr. Thompson agrees and differs fundamentally with Dr. Adger. He agrees in reducing all church officers to one order, but he diametrically differs in making that one the *clergy*, and not *elders*. Dr. Thompson's theory is the one which, by the irresistible necessity of logic and of facts, must be adopted in any attempt to reduce to one order the officers of the church. It has therefore found voice in our own church from independent investigation and analysis in a review of two publications on the Ruling Eldership, in the *Central Presbyterian* for September 17, 1859. Uniting with his author in lamenting the inefficiency of our church, he lays it down that "the theory of the Presbyterian church is defective in regard to the office of the eldership, and that defect militates against her efficiency in this work, and perhaps lays the foundation for most of her deficiencies in other respects. We accept Presbyterianism as a thoroughly scriptural system in its doctrines, and in all essential points of government. As a whole we believe it impregnable, but in one point we conceive it inconsistent with itself and with the word of God.

"In the tracts noticed, and in all the discussions of this subject, we have seen, as well as the Form of Government itself, it is assumed that there are two distinct and independent classes of elders, the ruling and the preaching. . . . The teaching eldership is self-perpetuating, judged as to qualifications, elected and ordained by a Presbytery which may be constituted, and perform all its duties without one ruling elder. And in no



case do the ruling elders participate in the 'laying on of hands.' The ruling elder is the representative of the people elected and judged by them, and ordained by their representatives. The distinction is an official and permanent one. The ruling elder must be re-ordained, to become a teaching elder. The theory that makes this distinction we think defective and unscriptural. That there is a distinction between ruling and preaching elders made in the Scriptures, we admit; that it is official or permanent—we deny. In order to show this, we propose to examine briefly the common arguments for the office of ruling elder."

The reviewer then takes up the argument for such a distinction from the Synagogue, and show that it is based upon ignorance of real facts, and upon contradictory and uncertain traditions, and is clearly against Scripture in 1 Tim. v. 17. That passage he avers, "does not necessarily, nor even naturally, make an official distinction," and it is the only one he has been able to discover. "Some passages speak indeed of 'governments' as distinct officers in the church, and also of 'teachers.' But if the 'teachers' include the 'governments,' by a parity of reasoning, the 'governments' might also include 'teachers,' and we would have still but one office. It may be very well doubted whether the whole of this theory is not a false one. It proceeds on the ground that teaching being the higher office of the two, necessarily includes the lower—which is only true when both offices belong to the same department of service. The first magistracy of our country, includes all the lower offices of the executive department, but not the judicial or legislative. And it can be just as easily proven, and by precisely the same argument, that the judicial branch of any government—because it expounds the laws, includes the executive that executes them, as that expounding God's law includes governing in his house. Two things in fact are assumed without proof, in order to make an argument: 1st. That teaching is a higher office than ruling; and 2d. That the higher must include the lower—both of which are, to say the least, questionable."

This reviewer next replies to the argument for the twofold distinction of ruling and teaching elders, based on the plurality of them ascribed to every church. This he conclusively refutes, by showing that it has no force as applied to the incipient state of the church, when no limitation of territory was assigned to any church; when all were missionaries, and all was missionary ground; that in no instance is a hint dropped leading us to suspect that two offices bearing the same name are held forth, both of which may and must teach, but one class alone do this publicly.

"It seems clear to our mind that the whole argument by which the fundamental principle of the Presbyterian system



is supported, is just as strong against this particular point in the system. It establishes these points: 1st. That there is but one class of elders, having the same official character and standing, the same duties, and the same responsibilities. 2d. That there is but one ordination, and one standard of qualification for ordination. The distinction between ruling and teaching elders, is a concession to Episcopacy—an attempt to construct three orders of church officers without diocesan bishops. The real distinction, recognized in the Scriptures, is not in official character, but arises naturally and necessarily from the diversity of gifts bestowed on different men. All elders have the same title—elders, bishops, pastors, preachers, watchers, and rulers; and of necessity ought to possess all the powers and prerogatives implied in the titles. The same qualifications are required in all—even in the matter of teaching—‘apt to teach.’ Hands are to be ‘laid suddenly on no man.’ No novice is to be admitted into any office. Elders are ordained in every church, but no intimation is given that one was ordained to teach *publicly* and rule, and the other to teach *privately* and rule. The very necessity which has led our church to distinguish her two classes of elders, in popular usage, by the different names—ministers and elders—would have led to a similar distinction in the writers of the New Testament, had such a distinction existed, as now exists. (It might be a question whether the effort of our General Assembly to ignore ministerial titles does not grow out of the felt inconsistency between *the Book*, and *our Book*.)

This calm and very candid and bold-spoken reviewer concludes on this wise: “Both the documents noticed, and the whole course of our recent newspaper discussions show, that the mind of the church is awakening, if not to the view presented above, yet to an approximate one. Now if the present distinction be erroneous, it is not difficult to see the bad effect it must have on the efficient working of our system. More than perhaps any other one thing, it had contributed to produce the present apathetic state of the eldership, by degrading the office below the scriptural standard—by introducing incompetent and unqualified men into it—by relieving those well qualified for the duties from a sense of responsibility. . . This, however, we may affirm, that if our view be correct, every elder would be required to possess some gift both for ruling and teaching, and to exercise the gifts bestowed upon him. Every one would be a teaching elder, authorized to perform all the duties of the ministry, whenever and wherever, in the providence of God, he might be called to do so. All need not give themselves exclusively to the work of the ministry, but all might be required to work, as occasion demanded. Some

would still give themselves exclusively to the work, and occupy the same positions they now do, save in the matter of official distinction. Rules might be adopted in accordance with this view, regulating the exercise of gifts—even demanding some superior attainments in those given wholly to the work. Then, without the evils resulting from the system adopted by some other churches, we would have all their advantages for the effective occupancy of both new and partially supplied fields.”

“If these views are true, they show a great evil in our system. If they are not true, we would be glad to see some more full and satisfactory presentation of the authority for our present distinction between teaching and ruling elders. Nor are we alone in this wish.”

Now this able reviewer is involved in his logical labyrinth by adopting as true, the reiterated dictum that our standards teach that there is one order of presbyters, divided into two classes—the teaching and the ruling presbyter. This, however, is not their doctrine. The order of *presbyter*, and its collateral terms, bishop and pastor, which the advocates of this theory apply to the ruling elder, and to this class of officers primarily, our standards restrict to ministers exclusively, and never apply to ruling elders. They recognize, therefore, but one order and one office of Presbyters and bishops, and call it emphatically “the pastoral office;” and in proof of this they quote the very texts relied on by these theorists—1 Pet. v. 1; Tit. i. 5; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19. They also declare that “the ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are of *three orders*, and *not one*, viz. bishops or pastors (or presbyters—see ch. iv.); the representatives of the people *usually styled* ruling elders; and deacons.” (Form of Gov., ch. iii.) Ruling elders (*not presbyters*) are defined to be properly the representatives of the people, (lay delegates,) chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction *with* pastors or ministers,” who are therefore the primary, pre-existing, and essential rulers and teachers, and the only class of presbyters or bishops. Such is the definition given by our standards of ruling elders and presbyters; and to *describe* the former, they add “*commonly called*,” but not authoritatively *defined* to be, ruling elders. For the suggestive origin of this *common* name they quote 1 Tim. v. 17, in which the terms occur, and, as some suppose, in reference to it. That this was the purport of the quotation will be further apparent from the fact that the *definition* given of the office is an exact transfer from the Church of Scotland, from whom our church confessedly derived her nomenclature and her original standards, only that the official title given by her is *elders*—not *ruling elders*;—and in whose standards they are not even called elders,

but "other church governors;" and in which this text is not quoted in proof. It was necessary, therefore, in introducing the name ruling elder, to show the ground on which the office is "commonly so called." But of this again.

We have quoted thus fully from this review, because it shows where we are tending, by the inevitable gravitation or magnetic power of the theory of two classes of divinely instituted and permanently distinct officers, with only one name and one order. And let it be further remarked, that the title by which "a great part (*great part* is added to the Scottish Standards) of the Reformed churches understood" ruling elders to be designated, was not *ruling elders*, but "governments;" (and hence their title as given by Calvin, Knox, the Books of Discipline, and the Westminster Assembly, of "*governors*,") "and of those who rule well, but do not labour in word and doctrine." Now, it is evident that this long description is not a title, otherwise it would be as long as that of some German princes. Neither are these the words of Scripture, but a paraphrase and addition of eight words, which just put into the text the thing assumed as true. "*Rule well*," in English suggests the surname RULING, which the original (*οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες*, *those who preside, officiate, or administer well*) does not. The English word *elders* gives the name which the original (*πρεσβύτεροι*) only in its appellative or general sense does; and *in this sense only*, as we shall see, did a great part of the Reformed churches understand their "*governors*" to be *elders*, while many, and all the Presbyterian Standards, regard presbyters to be in 1 Tim. v. 17, as elsewhere, defined to be those who specially, as their chief business, labour in word and doctrine, and yet also rule or officiate, and administer ordinances; so that while to do this latter acceptably and to edification, was deserving of all honour and support, the faithful performance of the former was eminently worthy of being esteemed very highly in love for the work's sake.

The Rev. Stuart Robinson, in his very beautiful analysis of the church of God in its relation to the gospel, and as a natural, necessary development of it, holds, with the Reformers and our church always and everywhere, that for the development and accomplishment of its great purpose—to gather an elect body out of the race during successive ages, and to train and prepare them for the kingdom of heaven—the church requires THREE classes of officers, and three only. These are what he terms "the ministry of the ordinances; the preserving the order and harmony of the body, that is, government and discipline; and the provision for and care of the revenues of the community." This rings with the sound of the genuine, sterling metal, and is indeed, as we have seen, the exact teaching of the Second



Book of Discipline. "The Scriptures," he adds, "exhibit as the three divinely appointed officers, first, ministers, who both rule, and administer the ordinances—a double office necessarily growing out of the essential connection between the word and the spiritual government founded upon it; second, ministers of rule only, and in spirituals only, . . . ; third, the minister of temporal things, for the keeping prominent that ordinance through which is expressed the relation of one to another, and of one part to another part of this body, even as the other ordinances and government are expressive of the relation of one and all to the great Head." In pursuance of this design of the church, the apostles formally transferred to elders, (i. e. *presbyters*,) as to their successors in office, all the responsibilities which had devolved upon themselves as ordinary ministers, and all authority," &c. . . . "Thus it is manifest that the ordinary and permanent ministry of the church was shared by the apostles with the elders (*presbyters*) as . . . officially their equals in so far as concerns all the functions of an ordinary and permanent ministry in the church." In quoting as proof of this apostolical succession of presbyters, Acts xx. 17-35, Mr. Robinson calls attention to the illative particle *οὖν*, in ver. 28, and remarks, "Take heed, *therefore* directly connects the charge to the elders (*presbyters*) with the previous recital of the apostles' duties among them, and implies that in his absence, *these*, as well as what follows, devolve upon them. He formally recognizes the elders (*presbyters*) as his successors." His conclusion, therefore, from all his premises is, that "the general familiarity with this branch of the subject, renders unnecessary any argument in detail to show that the *last* and complete development of the church, under the apostles, exhibits as the THREE ordinary and permanent officers thereof, elders, who rule. . . ; elders, who both rule and labour in word and doctrine; deacons, who represent the fellowship of the members of the church in each other's gifts, and who have care of its revenues and the necessities of the poor." And yet, strange to say, within a page of the preceding classification, and under the same head of Church Government, Mr. Robinson puts that *second*, and as less "fundamental," which before he had made the *chief end* of the church, that is, the "ministry of the ordinances;" and he makes that "*the fundamental* office of the church, *from first to last*," which he had made *secondary* and *subservient*. And to sustain this arrangement, he quotes the two verses in Hebrews xiii. 17, 7, in both of which the very same term, *ἡγούμενος*, occurs in reference to the same parties, who, in ver. 7, are to be remembered and revered, though dead, and in ver. 17, to be obeyed while living; that is, those presbyters who *formerly* and those who *then* guided, ruled, and watched over them. So



plainly do these passages refer to one and the same class of officers, and to the ministers of the gospel—to “all (as Owen on ver. 7 interprets) who had spoken or preached the word of God unto them, whether apostles, evangelists, or pastors”—that Poole, in his Synopsis, only alludes to Grotius as including, in ver. 17, “other spiritual guides.” The reference to pastors, and to the work of the ministry, seems never to have been questioned until this theory required support.\*

Still, however, Mr. Robinson chimes in with the old familiar song of Presbytery, as it has been chanted by our sainted martyr-fathers, by maintaining in Christ's church a THREEFOLD order of officers, even as there is in Christ a threefold order of offices. The ministry is analogous to Christ's prophetic office. The eldership accords with Christ's kingly office; and the deaconship with his priestly, self-sacrificing office. May we not also find adumbrated in the triplicity of church officers, the trinity of the church's God, the monarchy of the Father, the mediate rule and dominion of the Son, and the ministration of the Spirit?

The church of Christ is, as it always was, a supreme Theocracy, of which God the Father is the original founder, over which Christ is set as King, and of which the Holy Spirit is the Ruler. This Theocracy is perpetual and immutable, and is carried on through the ministerial agency of appointed men, especially through the ministry by which it hath pleased God to save them that believe, and by which He represents himself to the people; but also by elders, by whom all the rights and interests of the people are represented to Him and secured for them; and by deacons, by whom the people, in all the gifts and graces bestowed upon them severally and jointly by God, are represented to each other and hold fellowship and enjoy mutual communication one with another. Such is the ministration by which the body of Christ is edified in love and unity. No part is inferior or unimportant. Each in its measure is essential to the health and happiness, to the unity and liberty, and to the power of the church, as being in its Head a divine theocracy, and in its members a spiritual representative, conservative republic. An imitation and adaptation of this is

\*See Bloomfield's Digest and his New Testament; McLean, Olshausen, and Ebard; Doddridge, Gill, Poole's Annotations, Matthew Henry (full on,) and Owen on ver. 7, which fixes the meaning. Cartwright, who himself believed in and framed a Discipline, including elders, confutes the Rhemish translation of *prelates*, by largely showing that it should be *pastors*, (Confut. of Rhemish Testament, pp. 650, 651.) Calvin interprets ver. 7 as exclusively referring to pastors, i. e. ministers; and ver. 17—though he thinks it includes “other rulers”—he enforces as chiefly and emphatically bearing on *pastors*, as opposed to *prelates*. Bengel is unusually full and strong, and Valpy's New Testament. Stuart says, “it is clearly used in the sense of teachers.” Boyse also, in Doddridge. Chrysostom says he never read these words without trembling.

found in the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, in which the presbyters and lay representatives form a chamber of deputies, and the bishops a senate, and in which the joint concurrence of both houses is necessary to any legislation. In our government the one order of clergy meets in one body with the representatives of the people, and they deliberate and decide as one body, the ministry still remaining independent as the sacred order, and acting as such in the presidency and administration of all ministerial offices and acts. By this balance of power, the conservative and popular elements are both secured, and the church preserved from becoming either a hierarchy or oligarchy of ONE order, (as this theory would make it,) or a mere democracy.

Be this as it may, a threefold distinction of officers—ministers, elders, and deacons—has been held forth always, everywhere, and by every Presbyterian church throughout the world, and nowhere more clearly than in the Books of Discipline and Westminster standards appended by Mr. Robinson to his volume.\*

Nowhere, also, we may here observe, will he find the principality and pre-eminence of the order of the ministry as the most especially to be honoured with a double honour, and as inclusive of all the others, more emphatically declared than in these noble declarations of the independence and spirituality of Christ's kirk and office-bearers? "According to the theory of the Presbyterian church, the greater office includes the less." Ministers are elders; the ministers and elders are deacons, and, as such, sit and act in the Deacons' Court, of which conjointly the pastor, elders, and deacons constitute the members.† The office of the elder (*presbyter*)—that is, the pastor, according to the Westminster standards, includes "that which the pastor is to do *from God to the people*"—such as "public reading of the Scriptures," "feeding the flock of God by preaching of the word," "catechizing," "the dispensation of other mysteries," "blessing the people from God," "taking care of the poor;" and he hath also a "ruling power over the flock as pastor." "Other *church governors* are to join with the ministers in the government of the church." "For officers in a particular congregation there ought to be one, at the least, to labour in word and doctrine, and to rule."‡ "It is also requisite there should be others to join in government, (1 Cor. xii. 28.)" Calvin everywhere exalts the pre-eminent

\*In publishing these he has rendered valuable service. He might have added the Book of Common Order, Craig's Catechism, and other early documents.

†Forbes' Digest of Rules and Procedure of the Free Church. Edinburgh, 1856, p. 9. We repeat this remark and reference.

‡Proved by 1 Tim. v. 17, and other texts. See in Robinson's "Church of God," ch. lxxii.

dignity and authority of the ministry. "The preaching of celestial doctrine is," he says, "committed to pastors," "Magnificent titles . . . therefore to teach us that God himself appears, and, as the author of this ordinance, requires his presence to be recognized in this institution." By these words (Eph. iv. 4-16) Calvin shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in governing his church, is a *principal* hand, &c. "Whosoever, therefore, studies to abolish this order and kind of government of which we speak, or *disparages* it as of *minor* importance, plots the devastation, or rather the ruin and destruction of the church; for neither are the light and heat of the sun, nor meat and drink, so necessary to sustain and cherish the present life, as is the apostolical and pastoral office to preserve a church in the earth."† In his commentary on 1 Tim. v. 17, Calvin says: "Yet he (the apostle) *prefers* those who labour in word and doctrine." In short, our own standards express the uniform testimony of every reformed church in the world when it pronounces "the pastoral office to be *first* in the church both for dignity and usefulness." *Form of Gov.*, ch. iv.

When, therefore, we find Mr. Robinson, with these ancient testimonies in his book and in his mind, and in contradiction to his own analysis, order of thought, and positive affirmations, making "elders who rule, the fundamental officers of the church, as a government from first to last,"\* we are constrained to use the words of Dr. King, and say, "the language develops only the necessities of a system."‡ To sustain the unity of this theory of the eldership we are considering, Mr. Robinson, in his concluding parallel comparison of the three systems of church government, uses this language: "The fundamental office of government in the church is the eldership—of two classes. . . . Besides this, the *only* power of government in the church is the office of the deacons, which concerns temporalities *only*," (p. 120.) As if one *office* could have "two classes," with distinct and exclusive offices; and as if deacons were any the less officers in the government of the church because their jurisdiction has reference only to *all its temporalities*, to all its charities, and to the poor. Deacons, though named, are ignored as a distinct, necessary, and important order of church officers, and yet he had previously declared this office to be "a power of government in the church," (pp. 89, 120.) This confusion is the necessary result of this new theory, which is based upon

†Institutes, B. IV., ch. i. and iii.

\*The Westminster standards, under the very head of the ministerial functions, compare them with those of the priests and Levites under the law, and as having "as ample a charge and commission as they had." See in Robinson, p. lxxix. and lxxx.

‡On the Eldership, p. 16, note.

the indefinite and equivocal term *πρεσβυτερος*, as it is rendered by *elder* in English, and will be found inseparable from it, since it founds upon it both its two-fold distinction and its attempted unity, which is, however, only that of an equivocal name.

The presbyter or pastor is, we have seen, by his very nature, an elder and a deacon also—that is, *their* functions are included under the authority and rule implied in his office. The reverse, however, is admitted not to be true. In the presbyter, therefore, we have a *generic order*, including in its the other two, and a *generic name*, which, in its broad and comprehensive sense, is equally applicable to deacons and elders. But it is *only* in such a *general* sense it can be applied to orders and offices so essentially and permanently distinct in their sphere and functions. In this ambiguity and double meaning of the term, and especially in the English term *elder*, is to be found the source of confusion and disagreement in this and every other author who adopts the theory in question.

“The word *elder*,” says the Second Book of Discipline, (ch. vi.) “in the Scripture sometime is the name of age, sometime of office. When it is the name of an office, sometime it is taken *largely*, comprehending as well the pastors and doctors as them who *are called* seniors or elders. In this our division *we call them elders* whom the *Apostles call presidents or governours.*” Thus plainly does this fundamental constitution of the Church of Scotland confine the term presbyter (or elder, in its strict official sense,) to ministers, and apply it only in its *large* sense to those representatives of the people whose proper name is governor or ruler, or as the Westminster standards, (which are now the actual constitution, and bound up with the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and Ireland, and England, and the numerous branches in Canada, in the United States, and elsewhere), call them, “others to join in government,” “other church governors,” “other public officers as are agreeable to, and warranted by, the word of God, to be church governors, and to *join with* the ministers in the government of the church,” and in the chapter of *Synodical Assemblies*, “other church governors, as also other fit persons when it shall be deemed expedient.” Gillespie and Rutherford, who, with others, represented the Church of Scotland in the Westminster Assembly, had adopted the newly-coined title of *ruling elder*, founded, as Gillespie teaches, on “the elders that rule well.”\* They laboured long and earnestly, both by the press and by their powerful pleadings, to introduce their views into the Assembly and

\*See Works, vol. i., “Government of the Church of Scotland,” ch. i., p. 10.



the Church of Scotland. Their first form of proposition to the Assembly was "that beside those presbyters who both rule and labour in word and doctrine, there be other presbyters who especially apply themselves to ruling." This, however, was rejected as "*almost a novelty in England.*"† Gillespie preserves another form of the proposition voted upon—"ruling elder or church governor."\* Both terms in this proposed title were however rejected, and after ten days' discussion, and "many a brave dispute," which led Baillie to "marvelling at the great learning, quickness, and eloquence in speaking," the Assembly settled down upon the terms above given, and repudiated altogether, as a proof text for the office, 1 Tim. v. 17, from which the name of *ruling elder* was professedly drawn, and from which Gillespie infers not merely a twofold, but a threefold distinction of elders—the preacher, the doctor, and the ruler.‡

A perfectly similar use of terms, *i. e.* in a strict official and in a large and general sense, is found in the name *deacon*. The word *διάκονος*, says the Second Book of Discipline, chap. viii., sometimes is largely taken, comprehending all them who bear office in the ministry . . . but now, as we speak, is taken only for them unto whom, &c. The office of the deacons so taken is an ordinary and perpetual function in the kingdom of Christ. And just as it would be absurd to say that the deaconship is the fundamental office of government in the church of Christ, or that ministers are only deacons, because they are called deacons—and yet in one sense of the term this is true;—so also, is it a mere sophistical play upon the double meaning and present general use of the term *elder*, to argue that because all ministers are elders, therefore all ministers are what are *now* understood by ruling elders.

The early advocates of this twofold distinction of ruling elder and teaching elder, founded upon 1 Tim. v. 17, recognized therefore the *general* and also the *strict official* sense of the term *elder*. They applied the term in its *general* meaning, as our standards do, to representatives of the people, and the term *presbyter* (the Greek word) exclusively to ministers. This will be found to be the case, with almost no exception, in all the old writers on Presbytery, as designedly as in our own standards, who employ 1 Tim. v. 17, as we have observed, only to justify the "common" use of the name ruling elder. These early writers prove the divine right of the office from the terms "governments," "rulers," "THE brethren," and, until the period of the Westminster Assembly, left all the other passages in

†Hetherington, Hist., p. 141.

\*See Robinson's "Church of God," p. lxxii., and Gillespie's Works, vol. ii.

‡See *ibid.* Beza and others did the same.

which the term *presbyter* is translated in English as *elder*, to refer to the ministry.

Neander suggested the interpretation which gives to the word in every passage its general appellative sense, and this theory was adopted and ably presented by Dr. Miller in his work on the Ruling Elder. He quotes, therefore, in proof of the office of ruling elder every passage in which the term *elder* is employed, and justifies his doing so, by saying that the plurality of such elders existing in many churches, determined the fact that both teaching and ruling elders must have been referred to. Contrary to the opinion and practice of Calvin, Knox, Gillespie, and the Reformers generally, he agreed with later authorities in making the office of the ruling elder permanent and constant. He was of opinion that elders should be ordained with imposition of hands, but that they were still subordinate to ministers and incapable of uniting in the ordination of ministers by imposition of their hands.

While, therefore, Dr. Miller accepted the theory of one order of presbyters with two classes, originated by Neander, and referred all passages alluding to them indiscriminately to both, nevertheless his form of the theory differs essentially from his followers, and is an *a priori* protest against it. He agrees with our standards in believing that "there ought to be three classes of officers to carry into full effect the laws of Christ's kingdom; at least one teaching elder, bishop, or pastor; a bench of ruling elders and deacons." *Ruling Elders*, pp. 28, 29. He makes ministers primary, and the elders "to assist in the inspection and government of the church." *Ibid.* He applied the terms bishop and pastor properly to the ministry. *Christian Ministry*, 66 and 57. He regarded the ruling elder as "an inferior officer," and "denied his right to lay on hands in the ordination of a superior." *Christian Ministry*, p. 74; *Ruling Elders*, pp. 286, 293. He denied "this office or any particular form of government to be of divine right," or "essential to the existence of a church." *Ruling Elders*, p. 19.

Neander's premises, as adopted by Dr. Miller, have, however, been carried out to their legitimate logical conclusions in contrariety to his own. There being but one name elder or many synonymous names; but one formula of qualifications, responsibilities, and duties; there is but one order of elders, who should ordain and be ordained, alike. If called to different functions by different gifts they are still one order, and yet so essentially different and distinct, that no lawful assembly or court of the church can take place without the presence and concurrence of both. The preacher and the ruler are both alike, bishops, presbyters, pastors, and teachers, "shepherds of the blood-bought flock," "made by the Holy Ghost overseers of the flock to feed

the church of God, from house to house, warning every one night and day with tears"—and yet only *one class* of this *one order* can publicly preach or administer sacraments, or marry, or pronounce sentence of deposition or excommunication, or even moderate a session, (not to say a Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly), or publicly and authoritatively conduct public services on the Sabbath, by reading, praying, and blessing the people. "It is obvious," says Dr. Adger, "that this view of the office of the ruling elder (*the other class of this one order*) so far from merging that office into the ministry of the word, *distinctly separates it* from the ministry, and shows plainly wherein the ruling elder is *inferior* to the teacher. He is *inferior* to him in respect to the word and sacraments. Paul says, that a bishop (or ruling elder) must be "apt to teach," but not because the duty of public instruction belongs officially to him. He teaches, indeed, from house to house, and he teaches also, whenever in the church courts he helps, either by advice or by mere voting, to make the deliverance of the body which decides some question of doctrine or order. And he must, therefore, be an intelligent man, qualified to disseminate the truth he learns from the teaching eldership, and from the word of God. *Yet he is not himself a teacher, but simply a ruler in God's house.*" *Southern Presb. Rev.* as before, p. 173.

But this theory, if it thus exalts *one class* of this *one order*, is not less efficacious in humbling this same class when represented in church courts. "So far is it from being 'the sense of our book,' " says Dr. Adger, "that in these courts the complete and regular members are ministers, while the elders are only admitted for a particular purpose, and on a special ground—that, on the contrary, preachers or teachers, *as such*, have indeed *no place at all in them!* They are assemblies of ruling elders, many of whom have the superadded *charisma* of preaching, but all of whom belong to the order of rulers. These courts are not 'bodies of ministers,' nor yet bodies of ministers with certain 'delegates of the people' *admitted to sit with them* upon some special principle, such as that which admits 'corresponding members.' But both the ministers and the elders appear in that body as rulers."

"Moreover," says Dr. Adger, "it is provided that ministers themselves shall appear among the rulers or representatives, *because* they are themselves also rulers or *representatives*. Such is the representative government which the Lord has given to his church. Her ministers are her representatives, for none of them ordinarily is ordained except upon her call. She must choose them, and they appear in all the courts as *chosen* by her. It is as being a ruler that we meet the minister in the session." "When our Book says (chap. v.) 'Ruling

elders are properly the representatives of the people,' it proceeds immediately to add, by way of explanation of this term, '*chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline.*' They are representatives of the people because they are *chosen rulers* of the people; and the Book says they are 'properly such representatives,' because they are *nothing more* than such representatives, or chosen rulers, and do not like ministers, have the function, also, of labouring in the word and administering the sacraments." Pp. 174, 175.

According to Dr. Adger there is but one order of officers in the church, and that is ruling elders, "the aboriginal presbyters," and "the essence of the presbyterate is ruling." Well, therefore, may he take up a lamentation over the inadequate and erroneous views of our church. "The whole volume (of Minutes) seems to say that the church does not value much her ruling eldership, that very special ascension gift of her Lord! Accordingly, when an elder is to be elected and ordained in a congregation, very often, simple personal respectability, conjoined with hopeful piety, is considered as amply qualifying any man for the office. Rarely is it insisted upon that he shall be well acquainted with our Book, or thoroughly grounded in his attachment to our system—and yet he is to administer the rules of that Book and govern according to the principles of that system! Sometimes a very moderate share of ordinary education is deemed sufficient for this pastor or bishop—and yet this pastor or bishop must be 'apt to teach!' Frequently the office is given to a man deeply immersed in worldly cares—and yet he is a high spiritual officer, who must be devoted to the interests of the kingdom! How can it be imagined that an hour or two of some evening every week, or even perhaps every month, to be spent in attending the meetings of the session, is enough for the discharge by such an officer of *that awful cure of immortal souls which he has suffered to be bound for life upon his shoulders!*"

The facts of Scripture in reference to preaching and presbyters cannot, however, be arranged by all the advocates of a "one order" theory under that of ruling elders; and hence we have seen this one order must, as some of its advocates hold, be that of pastors or preachers. This undoubtedly would have been the last analysis, if compelled to make it, of all our fathers, as it is of all Congregationalists, and, indeed, of the whole Christian world. Presbyterians, according to Dr. Miller, believe "that there is but one order of gospel ministers, and that there are two other classes of church officers, viz. ruling elders and deacons; but that neither of these are authorized to labour in the word and doctrine, or to administer either of the sacra-



ments.”\* “In the Presbyterian church, a presbyter without a pastoral charge is not a bishop. He is not an overseer of the flock. But when he is a presbyter placed in a pastoral charge, he is a scriptural bishop.”† And again, in speaking of “ruling elders, or those who are appointed to assist in governing the church, but who do not preach or administer the sacraments,” he says: “But this is not all; bearing rule in the church is *un-equivocally* represented as a *less honourable* employment than preaching or labouring in word and doctrine. *The mere ruling elder*, who performs his duty well, is declared to be worthy of double honour; but the elder who, to this function, adds the *more dignified and important one of preaching the gospel of salvation*, is declared to be entitled to an honour of a still higher kind.”§ Our conclusion therefore is, that a theory which leads its advocates to the most opposite and antagonistic conclusions, and to conclusions subversive of the intuitive instincts of the Christian heart, and of the doctrine of the ministry held with perfect uniformity, *ubique, semper et ab omnibus*, and on the supreme importance of which all Presbyterian churches are, and have ever been, most explicit and harmonious, must be sophistical, unscriptural, and un-presbyterian.

The sophistry of this theory will be painfully evident to any one reading the argumentative chapter of Dr. King on the ruling eldership.\*\* He does little more than bandy the word *elder* in its double ambiguity of meaning, first to Prelatists, and then to Congregationalists. He *assumes* that “by elders and bishops, Scripture denotes *one order* of functionaries,” and therefore as “the identical persons are called elders and bishops,” elders and bishops are the same, and the *only* order of ministers. Thus far he says nothing about his *two orders or classes of elders*, nor does he seem to have remembered that while bishops—that is, the ministers authorized to preach and administer ordinances—may be the same as those who in the English version are called *elders*, they may not be, and are not, what is understood by *ruling elders*. Elders, and ruling elders—which is neither a scriptural, nor a patristic, nor an original, nor a constitutionally presbyterian title—are not the same. Dr. King having thus inconclusively determined that because, in the English version, presbyter is translated elder—in order, as we shall show, to avoid the more proper term *priest*,‡ (which is *presbyter* contracted,) because of its Romish

\*Christian Ministry, p. 26.

†Ibid, p. 28.

§Christian Ministry, p. 65.

\*\*Rev. David King, D. D., LL. D. Carter's ed., Part I.

‡The Westminster Form of Government, which is the standard of the Church of Scotland, and of all other Presbyterian churches, even in this country beyond our own and its off-shoots, declares that “under the names

perversion—that therefore the order of presbyters, or of *Priests* in some Christian churches are *elders*, turns his attention to Independents. From Dr. Wardlaw, Mr. James, and Dr. Davidson, he quotes the statement that their “pastors,” by the very nature of their office, are clothed with spiritual authority and rule, and he infers—by what process we cannot imagine—that “since all elders rule, ministers might all, *in this sense*, be called ruling elders. So a minister rules, and he is officially a ruling elder.” And yet, in the next sentence, he states that Presbyterian churches call him who “*both teaches and rules*” minister or pastor, while they who are charged only with rule or superintendence, are ruling elders. (Pp. 14-16.) Again, Dr. King argues that because every church *originally* “had *bishops* and deacons,” and because *now* Independency, (and every other church in ordinary cases,) “assigns to each church a single *elder*”—the term in his proposition was *bishops*—“therefore these *bishops* must include *ruling elders*.” He is willing, with Dr. Davidson, that this plurality of bishops or presbyters in each church “should be pastors, and empowered to teach as well as rule,” and earnestly wishes his denomination would reduce this scheme to practice—“call them teaching elders or call them ruling elders.” The whole argument for *ruling elders*, whom he nevertheless distinguishes by essential functions from the more important office of the ministry, is founded on the use of the term *elder* “*in this sense*” in his premise, and “*in another sense*” in his conclusion.

This confusion and sophistry are, however, inseparable from the theory which identifies presbyters and ruling elders. In arguing with Episcopalians, and maintaining the divine right of presbyters to teach, rule, and ordain—in short, to do all that is permanently delegated to the successors of the Apostles “for the work of the ministry”—we are compelled to show that ALL THIS is attributed to PRESBYTERS in the word of God. But if the term means *rulers* in *general*—if ruling is the essence of the office designated by it—if “the best authorities are agreed,” as Dr. King (p. 24) says they are, “that in the first instance the office of eldership had respect *only* to superintendence,”—if this ruling is the fundamental and permanent order in the church, then it is no argument for the divine right of presbyters, as the successors of Apostles in ALL the permanent office and functions of the ministry, to prove that they may *rule*, (whatever that means) but not labour in word and doctrine, not publicly preach, nor pray, nor preside, nor administer ordinances, nor ordain. There is no argument in telling Prelatists that the terms presbyter, bishop, &c. are so indefinite

of Priests and Levites, to be continued under the gospel, are meant evangelical pastors.” (Ch. on Pastors.) Priest is presbyter contracted—*pres-tre*, *priest*.

that they may mean any office of authority in the church—even prelatial bishops themselves—for which any sanction may be found in the words, or in the facts, or in the precedents of Scripture. This is just what they want, and what most of them teach, and the very assumption upon which they rest the claims of their system.

This was the policy, as we shall show, of the opponents of Dr. Mason, and the position (unanswerably sustained) that the terms *presbyter* and *deacon*, are definite, fixed, and invariable in their meaning, so as to admit in no case of any doubt as to the office and officer intended, is his triumphant reply. The employment of one term to entitle *two* classes of offices and officers, distinguished by untransferable and permanent and essential prerogatives, powers, and functions, is an absurdity for which no precedent can be found in the universal language and uniform custom of man, and cannot, without disparagement to his wisdom, be attributed to God.\*

And hence we find that it is *only* in their argument with Presbyterians, “the *large*” sense of this term is employed to sustain a novel theory of the eldership. The opinion that the reference to a plurality of other officers in the churches besides deacons was in every case made to *ONE* general class with two orders was, we think, first published by Dr. Miller, and yet no man could more carefully and powerfully sustain in all his arguments against Prelacy the fixed and full meaning of the terms *presbyter* and *bishop*, as referring to the office and work of the ministry. “The reader is earnestly requested,” says Dr. Miller, “to remember at *every step* that by a scriptural or primitive *bishop* is *ALWAYS* meant a *presbyter*, pastor, or whatever else *he* may be called who has the pastoral care of a particular congregation.” *Christian Ministry*, p. 28. “The great question then to be decided is, does the New Testament teach, or intimate, that there are three classes or grades of gospel ministers, all of them authorized to labour in word and doctrine.” P. 36. “The word *presbyter*, or elder, became in process of time an *established* title of office. . . . THE APOSTLES gave the name of *ELDER* to the *PASTORS* and rulers of the churches they organized, and the rather because *these pastors* were,” &c. P. 52. “In short, the title of *bishop*, as applied to *ministers of the gospel*, occurs only four times in the New Testament; in *THREE* of these cases there is complete proof that it is given to those who are styled *presbyters*, and in the *FOURTH*, there is strong presumption,” &c. P. 58. “Were these officers prelates, or did they belong to that class which Episcopalians denominate the second order of clergy, *priests*, or, in other words, *presbyters*?” P. 58. “The *presbyters* had

\*See Dr. Mason’s Works, vol. ii., and our argument hereafter.

in apostolic times, as they now have, authority to preach the word and administer sacraments," p. 62; "the power of government or of ruling also," p. 63; "to ordain," p. 67, &c.

Such is the tenor of Dr. Miller's able and conclusive arguments against the claims of *prelates* to a superiority by divine right over *presbyters*, and such is the course pursued by every standard writer on the question between Prelacy and Presbytery. Let the reader examine the very clear and masterly exposition of this argument by Principal Hill in his Lectures on Divinity; or the recent elaborate work of Dr. Killen, "The Ancient Church;" or *any other*, from Blondel's Apology for Jerome to the present time, and he will see that a *fixed official* application of the terms presbyter, bishop, pastor, &c. to ministers of the gospel, in the New Testament, and by the apostolical, primitive and ancient church, is the chief corner-stone of the whole argument for the claims of presbytery to be the scriptural and primitive polity of the churches.

It was only, therefore, when Dr. Miller turned his attention to Independency, and to the very defective condition of the eldership in our own church, he was led to adopt Neander's interpretation, though completely subversive of his prelatic arguments. In his work on the Eldership, therefore, we could scarcely know that such a word as presbyter occurred in the New Testament. "We find bishops, *elders*, and deacons everywhere appointed. We find a plurality of *elders* ordained in every church. And we find the *elders* represented as overseers or inspectors of the church; as rulers in the house of God; and the members of the church exhorted to submit to them and obey them." P. 52. And as "a specimen of the New Testament representations on the subject" we have a rehearsal of every passage in which elders (in the original *presbyters*) are spoken of, although in his former volume the divine right of *presbyters* was made good against the claims of prelates by these very passages. Having thus prepared the way, Dr. Miller proceeds to the inference which he thinks inevitable from the (*assumed*) fact that in *every* church, and not merely in some of the largest, a plurality of *elders* were ordained. "The idea that it was considered as necessary, at such a time, that every church should have two, three, or four pastors or ministers, in the modern popular sense of these terms, is manifestly altogether inadmissible," and "some therefore were rulers who, as in the synagogues, formed a kind of congregational presbytery or consistory." P. 54.

Now in this statement, which is the foundation of the recent and variously developed theory, it is assumed, *first*, that in every case reference is made to a *single* congregation organized and complete within itself; limited in its sphere of operations



to its immediate bounds; and not to a missionary centre of Christian evangelization, "from which," as the apostle expressly states to the praise of the church at Thessalonica, "sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place." But as the church at Philippi, like the church at Antioch, at Rome, and at Jerusalem, was a missionary centre of evangelistic labour in the word and doctrine, we are explicitly taught—what reason would necessarily presume—that every church in the beginning was a missionary station, where missionaries from all the region round about located, and lived, and loved together, and had all things in common, and in united prayer and pains-taking planned and carried out their schemes in works of mercy. Or, the body in each case may have been, not any *one* congregation, in any one place, but *all those* who at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Rome, at Ephesus, at Philippi, called upon the name of the Lord and were called Christians. And that it is so, is *certain*, since the address is not the congregation or particular church, but "ALL the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, and (ALL) the bishops and deacons," also, which are there. So again it is "ALL that be in Rome called to be saints . . . whose faith is spoken of throughout the whole world"—by those of course who had been among them and who had gone forth everywhere preaching the word. So again, by "the church which is at Corinth," it is immediately declared is meant, "them (all) that are sanctified in Christ Jesus . . . with all that in *every* place (in the region round about) call upon the name of Jesus Christ." And thus it is that the apostle proceeds to mention several ministers, who had each of them a separate congregation calling itself by their name. In the second epistle to "the church of God which is at Corinth" is added, as included under this missionary station, "*all the saints which are in all Achaia.*" So it is in every case. It is "the saints and faithful brethren—brethren in Christ—which are at Colosse" and elsewhere, and not to any *one* particular congregation, that allusion is made when a plurality of presbyters or bishops are spoken of, and the farewell address of Paul to the presbyters of Ephesus was doubtless to *all* within the bounds of that missionary circuit who could be gathered together.

The assumption of this theory, "that a plurality of presbyters was ordained in every congregation," is contrary, therefore, to the fact that reference is in *every* case made to ALL the Christians in every city or place, however numerous might be their private congregational assemblies, and to *all* in the missionary region round about them. The assumption that those early presbyters—that is, presbyter missionaries—were "pastors or ministers in the *modern*, popular sense of those terms,

is manifestly altogether inadmissible." The assumption that even if there were a plurality of them in every missionary station, or even in every particular church, this would require us to consider them as in part not missionaries and ministers, is equally gratuitous, since, under their circumstances, believers could not depend on one, nor feel two or more burdensome on their plan of having all things common, of living plainly, of every one coöperating, and all freely giving as they were able. Even now, as Dr. Owen in several places admits, a plurality of pastors is just as conformable to the nature of a single organized church—which is the only kind he thinks Christ authorizes—as one pastor; and yet in addition to a pastor, whom he considers to be the proper presbyter or bishop, he would add, as necessary to a complete church, one or more ordained doctors, who are also ministers, and not ruling elders.\* And when this theory assumes, that because in a *general* sense the term *elder* may be given as a warrantable translation of the Greek word *presbyter* in its official sense during the apostolic age, (when the names of office were, it is said, used without scrupulosity and with much license,)† that therefore it includes *ruling elders* as now understood, there is a glaring *non sequitur*. In these assumptions, this theory abandons Presbyterian ground and our constant and irrefragable argument against Independency and Prelacy, and actually adopts and endorses the arguments of Prelatists in favour of the apostolical succession, name, and power of prelatical bishops on the one hand; and of Dr. Owen on the other hand for absolute Independency and the exclusive divine right of single churches, each complete within itself, and having power to elect and ordain its own officers, and officers only for itself. Dr. Owen ridicules the idea either of an universal or œcumenic minister or church which only a few could either see or hear.‡ From Owen also Dr. Miller received the idea that ruling elders should be ordained with imposition of hands—a novelty which, after experiment, he was constrained to abandon, and for which he could find no precedent in any Presbyterian church in the world.§ Dr. Owen fully understood, and explicitly states the *wide* application of the term *elder* to *any one* having rule or office under another, and so little stress does he put upon either the name *elder* or *ruling elder*, that he considers the office no distinctive peculiar characteristic of *any* denomination. "The truth is," says Owen, "and it must be acknowledged, that there is *no known church in the world* but they dispose the rule of the church in part into the hands of persons who have not the

\*See Works, vol. xvi., Edinb. ed., pp. 5, 44, 55.

†Dr. Miller on the Ministry, p. 66.

‡See *ibid.*, Pref., and pp. 24, 25, &c.

§See Owen, *ibid.*, p. 73, &c. Miller on Eldership, Pref.

power of authoritative preaching of the word and administration of the sacraments committed unto them;\*, and yet, to give more plausible weight to an argument in favour of ruling elders which do not define nor even distinguish the Presbyterian from Independent and other churches, this theory abandons the distinctive character of the presbyter, the fundamental argument for a presbytery from the multitude of Christians in one place, and the plurality of presbyters or pastors among them; and abandons every fence by which even Prelacy might be kept out of the fold. Dr. Owen exalts the ministry—his bishop, presbyter, or pastor. He proves its divine office, and authoritative rule, and pre-eminent dignity and responsibility by Acts xx., Eph. iv., and all those passages in which it is denominated *ποιμην*, *pastor*, *teacher*, and after quoting Acts xx. 17, 18, 28, he says: "If elders and bishops be not the same persons, having the same office, the same function, and the same duties, and the same names, it is impossible, so far as I understand, how it could be expressed." P. 45. Quoting for the same purpose 1 Pet. v. 1-3, where presbyters are to feed the flock, *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, taking oversight, and Heb. xiii. 17, where they are *ἡγούμενοι*, who watched for souls, and "whom others were bound to obey," he reiterates, in even stronger language, adding to the preceding "the same qualifications and characters, account and reward," "concerning whom there is in no one place in Scripture the *least mention* of inequality, disparity, or preference among them; they are essentially and *every way* the same." Pp. 45, 46. The theory of Owen was precisely that of Gillespie, and Rutherford,† and other Presbyterian divines of that time, in regard to the officers of Christ in a *particular* church. And although in the work quoted, which was corrected by him immediately before his death, and published in 1689,‡ he reprobates any other kind of church, yet we know that he thought the two parties in the Westminster Assembly "did in his judgment agree well enough if they could have thought so," and that had Presbyterian government been established at the Restoration, without a rigorous imposition of everything . . . Presbyterians and Independents would have been both to blame if they had continued in a state of separation from each other."\*\*

We have thus dwelt on the theory of Owen, with his four classes of officers; his very limited and qualified appropriation of (what he admits to be of very general and of various application) the name *elder* to ruling elders as now known; his

\*Owen on the Ministry, pp. 107, 42, 43, &c.

†Due Right of Presbyteries, Pastors, Teachers or Doctors, Elders, and Deacons, pp. 14, 15.

‡Works, vol. xvi., Pref., note, p. 2.

\*\*Works, vol. xv., p. 433.



restriction of all the passages (except 1 Tim. v. 17,) in which it and the correlative terms bishop, shepherd, teacher, overseer, &c., are used, to the ministry; his general approval of the views agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly; and his persistent rejection of any other than particular churches;—because the promulgators of the novel theory of one order and two classes of elders, and the promiscuous application to it of all the passages above referred to, claim much consideration for it, from the supposed concurrence of this eminent man.

Next to Owen, if not above him in the scale of authoritative determination of this question, is the late illustrious Neander. Upon his profound antiquarian and linguistic knowledge the theory of an originally one order of elders, and these ruling elders, is mainly founded. By him, probably, was Dr. Miller led into his interpretation of the New Testament use of the word elder. Neander is now made the chief corner-stone of their building by Dr. King, Dr. Adger, and others. But surely Neander's theory of church polity cannot be understood, or it would never be made authoritative by those who believe that Christ has established, by divine right, a fixed and permanent order of government and officers in his church, and that that is the order of *rulers*. What Neander's theory of church polity was, may be learned not only from his general Church History, and his History of the First Planting of the Christian Church, but also from his more recent Introduction to Dr. Coleman's "Primitive Church," written in 1843. To understand Neander's views, it must be borne in mind that he believed the external polity of the church to be an outgrowth of its gradual development; so that it was not the same at any two periods of the apostolic history. "The form of the church," says he, "remained not the same even through the whole course of the apostolic age from the first descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to the death of John the Apostle." "Under the guidance of the Spirit of God they gave the church that particular organization which, while it was best adapted to the circumstances and relations of the church at that time, was also best suited to the extension of the churches in their peculiar condition. . . . But forms may change with every change of circumstances. Many of the offices mentioned in that passage (Eph. iv. 11) were either entirely unknown at a later period, or existed in relations one to another entirely new." And after stating that there was a difference between pastors and teachers as they possessed the qualifications for ruling or preaching the word, he remarks that "there may have been persons endowed with the gift of teaching, and qualified thus to be teachers, who still belonged not to the class of presbyters. The relation of these offices to one another seems not to have



been the same in all stages of the development of Christian churches.”\* “The name *presbyter* was derived from the Jewish synagogue; but in the Gentile churches they took the name of bishops.” “The name of presbyters denoted” not *ruling* as our theorists assume, but “the *dignity* of their office. That of bishops was expressive rather of the nature of the office.” “But in process of time, some *one* might . . . come to be designated by the name *bishop*, which was *originally* applied to them *all* indiscriminately.” “This change in the relation of presbyters to each other was not the same in all the churches, but *varied* according to their different circumstances. It may have been as early as the latter part of the life of John, when he was sole survivor of the apostles, that *one*, as president of this body of presbyters, was distinguished by the name of *bishop*.” In other words, episcopacy may have been established *during* the life of the apostles.† The angels of the churches he considered to be figurative and symbolical representations of the whole church.‡ Neander consistently believed that not all the forms of the church government which were adapted to the exigencies of the church at this early period, can be received as patterns for the church at other times; neither can the *imitation* be pressed too far. “Whenever at a later period also any form of church government has arisen out of a series of events according to the direction of divine providence, and is organized and governed with regard to the Lord’s will, he may be said himself to have established it, and to operate through it by his Spirit.”§ Neander, therefore, believed not that an honest difference of opinion on these subjects was disreputable, or a sign of ignorance of fixed and certain principles, but that “men may honestly differ in their views on these minor points,” since all else is mutable except “the great principles.” He very affectionately urges all to abide by “the form of church government they find best suited to the wants of their own Christian community; only let them not seek to impose upon all Christians any one form as indispensably necessary. Only let them remember that the spirit of Christ may be carried on under other forms also;” and this he presses by name upon “Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Calvinists, and Lutherans.”\*\* Neander did not, therefore, have any views in accordance with our theorists, who found their inferences on his interpretation of the *first* temporary arrangements in the very beginning of Christianity, when *all* were rulers and all teachers, until necessity required a division of services corresponding to

\*Introduction to Coleman, pp. 16, 17.

†Introduction, pp. 20, 21.

‡Introduction, note. Dr. Killen adopts this theory.

§Introduction, pp. 16, 17, 18.

\*\*Introduction, pp. 17, 22, &c.

diversity of gifts. He admits, however, that soon "the gift of teaching, and the order of teachers who were endowed with it, are spoken of as constituting an entirely distinct function and order.‡ In the Epistle of Paul to Titus, when he requires the bishop to hold fast sound doctrine, and to be able to establish others in it, this, he thinks, certainly implies in it the bishop (and presbyter) must possess the gift of teaching or "the ordinary regular office of teaching." P. 258. He considered "the brethren" in the council at Jerusalem as "*as representing all, and acting in their name,*" and, of course, as representatives of the people in distinction from the *presbyters and apostles*.§

The necessity which compelled the theorists under consideration to resort to Owen, the champion of Independency, who does not believe the officers called by him ruling elders to be *peculiar to any one church in the world*, nor that there exists any gospel church beyond particular congregations, nor any officers having authority beyond their particular churches;\*—and to Neander, who found nothing in the apostolic churches settled, and believed no form or order of church polity permanent or prescribed;—proves the conscious weakness and insufficiency of the *foundation* on which they build, for they are all master workmen. But even master workmen cannot make brick without straw, nor build without brick, for assuredly the polity approved by Owen and Neander, whatever it may be, is not Presbyterian.†

But if deprived of any support from Owen and Neander, they fall back upon Calvin, as being *alone* a tower of invincible strength to any cause. But are these brethren, or are we, prepared to adopt and subscribe to the views of even Calvin, great and glorious as he was, and in his works and influence *still is*? The representatives of the people, associated by Zwingle in 1532, with the presbyters or pastors for discipline, were "pious men allowed him as his assistants." The members of the Consistory and Synod were preachers, "except the lay presidents. There were no representatives or deputies of several congregations. The protocols were issued by the court."\*\*\* Calvin introduced such assemblies of "clergy and laity. But still these laymen were not representatives of the congregation." In 1535 Calvin, in his Institutes, in their first compendious form, defined preachers, bishops, and elders. His elders or presbyters were still spiritual teachers as opposed to Popish prelates.

‡Church Hist., vol. i. p. 260, Lond. ed.

§Ibid. p. 205.

\*He thought a church had no right to ordain a man to preach to the heathen. Works, vol. xx. p. 457, Lond. ed.

†On the alleged dying regret of Owen, and favourable opinion of Presbyterianism, see the confutation by the editor, in Works, vol. xvi. Pref. Note, recent Edinb. ed.

\*\*Paul Henry's Life of Calvin, vol. i. pp. 368, 369.

It was not till long after he found in 1 Tim. v. 17, a foundation for a distinction, in a *large* sense of the term, between teaching and ruling elders, and he always, even afterwards, restricted the term presbyter in its proper official designation to pastors (who were preachers) as we might largely show. In expounding that very passage he is studiously careful to confine its full and proper application to pastors. The apostle, he says, "enjoins that support shall be provided chiefly for pastors who are employed in teaching," and quotes Chrysostom as understanding by "double honour" "support and reverence." With "the pastor," he says, "there were united in a common council men of worth and good character that were chosen from among the people." In verse 19 he identifies the term "presbyter" with "pastors and godly teachers." "All, therefore, to whom the office of teaching was committed they call presbyters, and in each city *these presbyters* selected one (a presbyter) to whom *they* gave the *special* title of bishop."\* It is in this sense he uniformly uses the term presbyter in the *Institutes*, that is, as synonymous with bishop and pastor, as they "who receive a commission to preach the gospel and administer sacraments," who are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God; "holding fast the faithful word," &c. "In giving," says he, "the name of bishops, presbyters, and pastors, indiscriminately to those who govern churches, I have done it on the authority of Scripture. To all who discharge the ministry of the word it gives the name of bishops." And in proof, he proceeds to quote Titus i. 5-7; Acts xx. 17; Eph. iv.; also, Phil. i. 1; Acts xiv. 23; 1 Peter v. 1, &c., *the very passages* adduced by our theorists to substantiate their application to ruling elders. These, however, Calvin immediately proceeds to notice as "*other officers*"—"two (*others*) of perpetual duration, viz. government and care of the poor. By these governors I understand SENIORS selected from the people to unite with the bishops."† "From the beginning, therefore, each church had its senate, (*conseil ou consistoire*) composed of pious, grave, and venerable men, in whom was lodged the power of correcting faults."‡

In 1538 Calvin gave an outline of his own church government at Geneva to the Synod of Zurich for imitation. The city was divided into parishes, each having its own minister, with "respectable and prudent men selected from each quarter of the city to join *with us* in watching over the proper mode of its (i. e. excommunication) infliction. A becoming order must be observed in the call of the clergy, that the laying on of

\**Institutes*, B. IV. chap. iv. § 2.

†*Ibid.*, B. IV. chap. iii. § 8.

‡*Ibid.*



hands, *which belongeth only to the clergy*, may not be taken away.”\*

In his Plea for the Necessity of Reforming the Church, presented to the imperial diet at Spires in 1544, while under the head of Discipline, he dwells pointedly on “the pastoral *office itself* as instituted by Christ,” and makes no allusion to elders or seniors. “Scarcely one in a hundred of the bishops will be found who ever mounts the pulpit in order to teach.” “The pastoral office we have restored, both according to the apostolic rule and the practice of the primitive church, by insisting that *every one who rules in the church, also teach.*”† Ancient synods he quotes as defining the several duties of a bishop, among which is “holy discipline,” and says, “in *all* these duties *presbyters* ought to be the *bishops’* coadjutors.” In his Remarks (1544) on the Pope’s Letter to the Emperor, in which he urges “restoring the ancient deaconship,” “Then,” says he, “this profane, that is as they term it. lay correction might not only travel to other churches, but,” &c.‡

In 1548 Calvin introduced his famous Ordonnances Ecclesiastiques, in which it is provided that “the choice of preachers depends in the first instance on the clergy.” The elders are to share with the ministers in watching over the conduct and education of the clergy; but THE COUNCIL (a political body) was to determine disputes and punish offenders. The preachers were to give the bread, the elders AND DEACONS the cup. The elders were chosen by the larger council, and confirmed by the preachers. They were also elected annually. The consistory was convened by the civil court. The elders were not chosen out of the congregation to represent them, but out of the civil courts.§ Surely these were laymen, and not clergy, with whom they are contrasted, and by whom their choice was ratified.

Calvin overthrew the caste of the Catholic clergy by establishing an order of presbyters who were ALL, as he declared, preachers and co-equal, and upon this is based the Presbyterian character of his polity. His *elders* were not spiritual officers appointed in and by the church, and could not possibly have given the name of Presbytery, first introduced by Beza, to the Presbyterian system. In France, where Calvin’s Constitution and Confession were adopted, their courts consisted of preachers and laymen—*anciens* (the most *general* meaning of the term presbyter,) and *anciens diacres*, so that deacons were *elders* in the same sense with *elders*, and *were also members of the consistory*. Neither was the office of elder made obli-

\*Paul Henry’s Life of Calvin, vol. i. pp. 283, 284.

†Ibid. pp. 32, 85, 86, 175, Edinb. ed.

‡Ibid. vol. i. p. 281, 282.

§See Paul Henry’s Life of Calvin, vol. i. pp. 386, 389.



gatory upon the churches, but left to their own choice.\* “We agree, says that church, in 1645, the office of deacon is of divine appointment, &c., and whereas divers are of opinion that there is also the office of ruling elders who labour not in word and doctrine, and others think otherwise, we agree that this difference make no breach among us.”†

From all we have stated it is evident how very different were the views of Calvin from that theory, to sustain which his authority is pleaded. His presbyters were our pastors or ministers. His elders or *anciens* (for he never uses the title of *ruling elders*) were laymen, and appointed by laymen—representatives of the people, but not of particular congregations, and were annually elected; and so far from attaching to them the *name* or scriptural character, qualifications, functions, and responsibilities claimed by this theory for *ruling elders*, he attributes them exclusively to the pastors. And while he believed his system to be in accordance with Scripture and ancient usage, he did not hold any form of polity and discipline to be so perfectly and paramountly required by divine appointment as to be essential to the being of a true church, to the unchurching of those who hold the truth under other forms. This is made manifest by the whole tenor of his writings, but most plainly in his celebrated letter to Somerset; his form of polity proposed to Sigismund, King of Poland; and from his retaining a permanent presidency over the clergy of Geneva until his death, although in 1580, as appears from the city registers, the preachers expressed their fears that the office of president, if its possessor were not elected weekly, might be converted at length into that of a bishop. Beza, as Casaubon declares, said to him that Calvin, who had rejected episcopacy, was in fact bishop of Geneva, and that a little before his death he proposed to make him his successor.‡ We know also that in 1543 Calvin established the Liturgy, which still constitutes the foundation of the Liturgies of the Reformed churches, and was adopted and introduced by Knox into Scotland, where it was incorporated with their book of Psalmody; and in this Liturgy, Calvin embodied the Confession of Sins from the Mass Book, and also the Preparation for the Communion.

No authority, therefore, can be pleaded for any one feature of the theory of the eldership, now put forth under great names and with confident boldness, from Calvin, Neander, or Dr. Miller. Dr. Miller, indeed, broached the principle of interpretation, and initiated the form of ordination from which it has gradually sprung. This was given only in his enlarged edition

\*See Paul Henry's Life of Calvin, vol. i. p. 393, 395.

†Quick's Synodicon, vol. i. p. 229, and vol. ii. p. 472.

‡See Paul Henry's Life of Calvin, pp. 400, 401, 402.

of his work on the Eldership, in 1831. In this he was "led to modify some former opinions," and acknowledges that in asserting the divine warrant and authority for the office, "and probably in several other opinions respecting the office advanced" in his pages, he "knew that some of his brethren do not concur with him," but "differed materially."

This opposition was manifested in a series of very able and learned articles by Dr. James P. Wilson, of Philadelphia, first issued in the *Christian Spectator*, and embodied, in 1833, in a considerable volume on *The Primitive Government of Christian Churches*," and published, after his death, as "a defence against unfounded pretensions . . . and making *mute* presbyters a characteristic of the primitive church." The author employs his powerful and acute intellect, and close and cogent analysis and reasoning, upon an examination of the writings of the Fathers and later ages, and by a critical investigation of Scripture, to prove that "but two orders or kinds of officers were instituted—*presbyters*, who were called also pastors, to teach, ordain, administer baptism and the eucharist, and to govern—and *deacons*, to serve. Among the presbyters—a bench of whom was at first in every church, and but one presbytery in a society or city—there was one who presided, denominated the *πρoεστως*, *angel*, and by other names. Our ruling elders are "but another name for deacon, and in a large portion of the American Presbyterian Church no other deacon exists." P. 6. The ordination, charge, authority, and duties of both being the same, they have, he thinks, been practically merged into one, which is true also, as Principal Hill remarks of the Church of Scotland, and, we may add, of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, provision being made for it in its Book of Discipline. See § 6, pp. 7, 8.

The controversy, and especially Dr. Miller's earnest, able, and spiritual appeal on behalf of a neglected eldership, excited very deep and general attention, and a growing interest both in the church and among elders themselves, the beneficial effects of which are yet increasingly manifest in the larger attendance of elders in our church courts, and in those conventions of elders and deacons which are so happily characteristic of our times, and so well adapted to lead to a proper appreciation of the dignity, the design, and the duties of both classes of officers. On Dr. Miller's principle of interpretation, the term *presbyter* is appellative, and not official. It designates one generic class, one order, one office, without distinction in name, nature, qualifications, or functions. The only difference is in work, not in office; and this is created by gifts from God and the call of the people, and not by a divine institution as well as a divine call. The efforts to sustain one order and two

classes, where no difference exists in name, nature, qualifications, and functions, as set forth in Scripture, are manifestly and increasingly hopeless and insuperable. A choice must be made between one order of ministers or one order of rulers, labouring in common according to their diversified gifts and graces. To this conclusion, under the great weight of Dr. Breckinridge's lead and influence, a portion of our church has been tending. Since 1842 our General Assembly, and our church generally, have been agitated by those who considered that the limitation of the power of imposing hands in the ordination of ministers, to ministers, involves the denial that they (i. e. ruling elders) are scriptural presbyters, which denial seems to them to undermine the foundation of Presbyterian order, "and who hold that it is *only* as ruling elders that ministers are entitled to seats in our church courts."\* This, therefore, is the logical conclusion from the premises, that Scripture uses the term *Presbyter* and its collateral names, appellatively, for one order, to which are to be referred all its deliverances concerning office, qualifications, functions, responsibilities, and rewards, the fundamental idea conveyed by the order being considered that of rule. But if, on the other hand, the idea fundamental to Christianity, as a dispensation of mercy, most unquestionably is the proclamation of a glorious gospel to guilty, but not abandoned sinners; and if presbyters are spoken of under every variety of form as the official agents through whom it pleased God, by this foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, then the logical inference from the same premises is, that the one fundamental order of the church of God which has never been wanting, and never can be;—of which Christ himself was the *chief* Shepherd and Bishop, (or *Presbyter*) of souls; and with whom his apostles were also fellow-presbyters;—is *preaching* and not *ruling*, preachers and not rulers, and that ALL presbyters must therefore, as indeed the word of God imperatively enjoins, be *apt* to teach, and to convince gainsayers also—that is, be preachers of the word. In 2 Tim. ii. 24, speaking of Timothy, and of all the presbyters ordained by him, the apostle says, "for the servant of the Lord must be *apt to teach*." And such we have seen, is the conclusion of Dr. Wilson and others, and, as we shall yet see, of many more.

To one or other result the theory of the indiscriminate appellative character of presbyters inevitably leads. There is no *consistent* middle ground. A distinction adjectively between teaching and preaching presbyters can make no difference where name, nature, qualifications, functions, and responsibilities are one and the same, and spoken of one and the same

\*See Baird's Digest, pp. 74, 79.

parties; and the difference between preachers, who are the only authorized heralds of the gospel, teachers of the truth, administrators of ordinances, ordainers of a perpetuated ministry, presiding officers in all ecclesiastical assemblies, and who are the only fixed, constant, and absolutely essential members of any one of them—the difference, we say, between these and ruling elders—*whom they ordain*, and authoritatively induct into office, can never be logically nor properly defined by an *adjective* distinction appended to the name of presbyter, which officially applies to ruling elders alone.

The unsatisfactory arguments and insufficient proofs brought to sustain such a nominal unity between two orders so essentially diverse, and a nominal distinction for a generic, fundamental, permanent difference in authority and functions, are palpable evidence that the failure is not in the theorists, but in the theory; not in the analysis, but in the facts. An agreement in one kind and measure of rule, while essentially differing in other kinds of rule—as in that of the word, and sacraments, and ordination, and presidency, and position, and publicity—is surely no reasonable warrant for applying to both the same name, nature, order, office, qualifications, and responsibilities. Deacons agree with both in a certain kind of rule, equally important and necessary in its place, and only differ in other kinds of rule; and the unity of name, nature, &c., might, therefore, as well be extended to them. And as their name certainly is applied to all church officers, so is presbyter, as an appellative name, applied to deacons, and both names may in this sense be properly applied to any church officer.

On the basis of this appellative use of the terms presbyter, bishop, &c., the argument from plurality as a proof of a plurality of *ruling elders* in each church, has led Mr. Guthrie, of Scotland, in a very able and lucid presentation of the entire substance of Dr. Miller's work, to prepare a form of church government for the Morrisonian body, adopting the principles of our system, only limiting them, as his argument requires, to *particular churches as alone* authorized by Scripture. He also rejects, as proof of a *ruling eldership*, every passage of Scripture, except 1 Tim. v. 17, and the admitted indiscriminate appellative use of the term *elders*.\*

The Plymouth Brethren in England, and the Campbellites in America, on the contrary, have carried out the argument to the opposite extreme, and while holding only to particular churches reject all other officers than rulers, or managers under

\*A Manual of Church Government, with a special reference to the office of Elder, by John Guthrie, Minister of Zion Chapel, Kendal. London: S. Ware & Co. 1846.



some name, leaving every man, as among the Quakers, to exercise his gift by becoming, for the occasion, or statedly, the preacher.

Dr. Breckinridge takes for granted the same premises, and delineates, as among the permanent officers of the church, "elders in whose hands the government of the church is permanently and exclusively lodged." Of this order the essence is rule. "Being presbyter, he is ruler." Ministers are a class under this one order. "They feed the flock; they have the oversight of the flock; they are its teachers, its rulers, its pastors, its bishops, all under the one name—elders." "The ministers of the gospel, therefore, are rulers—not as ministers, nor as stewards, but as elders. On account of *gifts* and callings of God, they become a separate *class of elders*—not by any means a *different order*."† "On ministers, however, great additional honours are laid by God." "The great function of the ministry in word and doctrine, and that of stewardship of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, is divinely committed to them; and this is a delegation from Christ, and the most glorious of all." P. 641. This function Dr. Breckinridge denominates "the power of order—*potestas ordinis*. The distinction between this and *potestas regiminis* (i. e. the power of rule or government,) is fundamental, and the difference in the use and exercise of the two powers is also fundamental." A minister is further distinguished from a ruler in that his "power is *several*, never *joint*"—that is, it is personal and inherent in him—"ex ordine, by virtue of his being what he is;" whereas "the power of regimen or rule (that is, of the ruling elder) is a joint power, and never several. No presbyter has any several powers of rule; the power itself is joint, and can be exercised only by a tribunal, never by a single person, nor by any number of single persons taken severally."\* And yet these powers, so diverse and so fundamentally distinct in use and exercise, are to be concentrated in one order!

But though there is but one order, with two functions or powers fundamentally distinct in nature and exercise, there are other office-bearers, deacons and evangelists; so that on the whole we have *one order* of office-bearers, and four classes.

Dr. Killen, in his recent elaborate, and, to some extent original, and in all respects able and interesting work, "The Ancient Church,"‡ has, we regret to find, adopted also Dr. Miller's premises, and with equally unsatisfactory and inconsistent results. No genius—no erudition—no logic—no eloquence—no dogmatism, however authoritative—can bring order

† Knowledge of God, vol. ii. p. 629 and 641.

\* Knowledge of God, vol. ii. p. 642.

‡ The History, Doctrine, Worship, and Constitution of the Ancient Church for the first Three Centuries. New York and London, 1859.

out of confusion, unity out of diversity, or harmony out of discord. The premises being fallacious, the conclusions must be untenable, and the building unsound. A statement of Dr. Killen's attempted exposition of the officers of the Christian church will illustrate these remarks. And, for the present, this is all we propose doing, either as it regards his theory or that of Dr. Breckinridge, as they will come before us in another article.

In his exposition of the ordinary office-bearers of the Christian church Dr. Killen finds it impossible to harmonize the statements of Scripture with the theory of a one order of elders with two classes—one ruling and one teaching. "The ordinary office-bearers of the apostolic church were pastors, teachers, and helps; or teachers, rulers, and deacons." There are good grounds for believing that the "pastors" mentioned before the "teachers" in one text are equivalent to the "governments" mentioned after them in the other. The *only* reason, however, given is, that "the *lay* council of the modern synagogue are called *parnasim* or pastors." "Nor is it strange that those intrusted with *ecclesiastical government* should be styled pastors or shepherds; for they were the guardians and rulers of the flock of God." Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 2. "The elders, or bishops, were the same as pastors." 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 5. "Hence elders are required to act as faithful pastors under Christ, the chief Shepherd." 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 4, and Acts xx. 17, 28. It appears, too, that while some of these (*same*) elders were only pastors or rulers, others were also teachers. 1 Tim. v. 17. "We may then see that the teachers, governments, and helps . . . are the same as the bishops and deacons mentioned elsewhere." Compare, he says, 1 Cor. xii. 28, Philip. i. 1, 1 Tim. iii. 1-8.

Now, let us try to arrange them. We have first, pastors, or rulers, or governments. Secondly, teachers or bishops. Thirdly, helps or deacons. But we are told that elders (and, of course, governments and pastors,) and bishops are interchangeable—that elders were also teachers—that when it occurs alone, *bishop* includes under it, pastors, governments, rulers, and teachers—that elders were not all preachers—that "these elders were appointed simply to 'take care' (!) of the church of God," and "it was not necessary that each individual should perform all the functions of the *pastoral office*." He had just determined that the pastoral office is that of the ruling elder. And yet he is constrained by the necessary use of the universal and invariable *usus loquendi* of the church universal to employ it, in order to designate the ministry, for in the next sentence he says, "the preacher is to minister to a single congregation." But in further proof that *pastors* were ruling elders he affirms that, because the apostle (1 Tim. v. 5, 7)

speaks of "presbyters who rule well," (which Dr. Killen, in contrariety to Dr. Breckinridge and others mentioned, admits to be a function, though a subordinate one, of the preacher *ex officio*,) therefore they did not preach also. This, however, is an evident *non sequitur*, since Dr. Breckinridge and Dr. Adger also hold, that in order to be a preacher a man *must* first be a ruler—the rulers and the *charisma*, or function of teaching, constituting a minister. A good minister must, therefore, be a good ruler, though he may excel in one or other department. Another proof of his position is, that in enumerating the qualifications necessary for a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 2-7,) the apostle employs only one word alluding to his teaching, that is—"apt to teach;" while as to his ability "to propagate his principles," he "scarcely refers to it or to his oratory at all." "It is *remarkable*, not that this is so, but how accurately it accords with the constant spirit of him who spake not in the words of man's wisdom—who was not ashamed of the despised gospel—who regarded the foolishness of preaching as God's appointed instrumentality—the power of God 'to save them that believe'—and who could write such passages as 1 Cor. i. 11-31."

But further, Dr. Killen urges that this teaching, and aptness to teach, does not imply that he must be qualified to "*preach*, for *teaching* and *preaching* are repeatedly distinguished in the New Testament," and yet we have been told by him, that *teachers* means preachers in passages where the same apostle uses the same word, (see 1 Cor. xii. 28, Rom. xi. 7, and Ephes. iv.) and that the *charisma* of *teaching*, (the very same word,) added to a ruling elder, makes a preacher. In confirmation, however, of his last position, Dr. Killen quotes 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, where "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, *apt to teach*, patient in *meekness*, *instructing* those that oppose themselves if peradventure," &c. Here he says "apt to teach" refers apparently to a talent for winning over gainsayers by means of instruction communicated in *private conversation*. And yet, while all that has been ever deemed peculiarly solemn and authoritative as bearing upon a soul-saving, Christ-loving ministry, is thus weakened down to the generalities of private Christian instruction, we are reminded in the next paragraph that "still preaching is the grand ordinance of God, as well for the edification of saints as for the conversion of sinners." "It thus appears that, after all, preaching held the *most honourable position* amongst the ordinary functionaries of the apostolic church. Whilst his office required the highest order of gifts and accomplishments, and exacted the largest amount of mental, and even of physical exertion, the prosperity of the whole ecclesiastical community depended mainly on his acceptance and efficiency." "The preaching elder



was very properly treated with peculiar deference. He was accordingly recognized as the stated president of the presbytery or eldership." "Even the apostles repeatedly testified that they regarded the preaching of the word as the *highest* department of *their* office. It was not as church *rulers*, but as church *teachers*, (*although teaching had previously been distigished from preaching*, and attached by highest sanctions and weightiest responsibilities and most solemn texts in all Scripture to *ruling elders*) they were specially distinguished, and the people were bound to respect and sustain and communicate to him that *teacheth* (who were just proved to be rulers) in all good things." P. 231-236.

Can it then be possible that the office, or work, or functions, or charisma—call it what you will—of preaching, is so transcendently important that Dr. Killen, as soon as he turns his attention from a foregone theory of the eldership he felt called upon to maintain once more reminds us that "the business of *ruling* originally formed only a *subordinate* part of the duty of the church *teacher*?" P. 238. What will he, and our own theorists, say to that? Is it true that "the apostles instituted no class of spiritual *overseers* to whose jurisdiction all other preachers are amenable," and yet that Christ, with all his gifts to his church, and with preachers as the one and only order he personally commissioned (*eighty-two of them*)—and with preaching as the one all-comprehending commission given to his church—has not even honoured the ministry with a distinct official title? Can it be that this highest power and province, this final end, of the church, even the calling out, gathering, and garnering lost but blood-bought souls for eternal paradise of rest, has only a partial use of the name of a *subordinate* class or function;—has no existence apart from it;—has only, in distinction from it, a charisma, a superadded gift? Can it be that this great, and glorious, and life-giving, and life-preserving power of the church unto salvation to every one who will believe, is nowhere portrayed, had no institution, no commission, no defined qualifications, no supreme and solemn sanctions, no everlasting recompense holding it up to the reverential regard and the sanctified ambition of the world? Can it be that this more than angelic heraldry cannot even be spoken of in the language of Scripture without confusion of names, as is found in the last sentence quoted above, where the very term *overseer*, which Dr. Killen took pains (p. 232) to restrict to rulers, is employed to express *preachers*; and the very term *teacher*, which he laboured to identify with the same function, (p. 234,) is employed as officially designative of the preacher, and *overseers*, and *rulers*, and *teachers* (his ruling elders) are identified not only in class, but in order with "all *other* preachers?" No,



no!—it is impossible. God is not the God of “confusion worse confounded,” such as we have seen the best men and the brightest minds have involved themselves in, and would involve the church of God in.

The *πρωτον ψευδος*, the source of all the difficulty, is in the adoption of the appellative interpretation of *presbyter* given by Neander, and of his theory of the primordial *planting* state of the Christian church in its progressive and even yet immature condition, as actually characteristic of that finished house of which Christ is the builder, and maker, and occupant, and whose foundation is the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The confusion we have noticed will be found to run through the whole volume of Dr. Killen. We have been aware for many years that Dr. Killen had adopted the opinion that “ruling elders are very much the same as the presbyters referred to by the writers of the second and third centuries.” In sustaining this opinion in his “Ancient Church,” we have marked a multitude of passages in which he has substituted the English word *elder* for the original word *presbyter*, and its cognate terms; and sometimes in the same sentence or argument of a writer quoted, he uses the terms, *elder*, *presbyter*, *minister*, *ruler*, *pastor*, *preaching elder*, *elders who only ruled*, *moderator*, *session*, *synod*, *brethren*, in evident unfairness to the real and manifest meaning of the writers.\* After his discussion of the *ruling elder* question, as noticed above, the whole book is devoted to the question of presbytery *versus* prelacy, and the whole strength of his weighty and conclusive argument is in the fact that the presbyter of Scripture and the presbyter of the Fathers is a minister, and the *only* order of ministers instituted and clothed with the powers of jurisdiction and of order by divine right, whatever might be the *custom* of churches brought in, as Jerome Hilary and Tertullian very remarkably testify,—*paulatim*—little by little—as circumstances modified the condition and necessities of the church.

It will be unnecessary to dwell upon the short treatise of Guthrie (1726) on Ruling Elders and Deacons, as it perfectly accords with the views of Gillespie, Rutherford, and others, and only alleges in proof of the divine institution of ruling elders the three usual passages, Rom. xii. 6-8, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and 1 Tim. v. 17.†

The only other works distinctively on the office of ruling

\*See all these terms on one single page, p. 555. See, e. g., 548, 549, 559, 560, 576, 616, 619, 621, 622; 498, 501, 502, 503, 504, 506, 528, 532, 524, 533. On p. 525, in quoting Jerome, he uses *elders*, and in referring to it for another purpose on p. 534, *presbyters*; and so with Hilary, p. 541.

†This will be found reprinted in Lorimer's work on the Eldership. Glasgow, 1841.

elder known to us, are those of Dr. McKerrow,† and the Rev. John G. Lorimer,‡ both of which present a re-statement and skilful adaptation of the views and arguments of Dr. Miller.

But we must close this article, and reserve for another the consideration of the real bearing of, and the magnitude of the interests involved in, these theories of the eldership. It will be our object not to propound another and still later theory, but to show what is the theory of the Presbyterian church throughout the world—for it is one uniform and fixed—and the true nature, dignity, and *relations of the eldership*; that the *one* order theory of the presbyter and elder in all its chameleon variety of forms is novel; contrary in all its assumptions to Scripture and to historical facts; in direct conflict with the standards of the Presbyterian church in Scotland, in Ireland, and these United States; and going back to the beginning—to the discipline of the Syrian, the Waldensian, the Genevan, the Puritan, and the patristic churches; and that it is subversive of Presbyterianism, of the ministry, of the eldership, and of the deaconship.

The discussion has been pressed upon us, and by friends, not foes. There is no rivalry among us but for the truth and order of Christ's blood-bought church. There is nothing personal or private. The question happily cannot be made a fundamental one except in the possible results of a practical working out of what is still, with little exception, *theory*. Our church only *requires explicit approval* of her Form of Government and Discipline from ministers, elders, and deacons, and *not even this* from licentiates.\* She does not believe, as the ever candid and catholic-spirited Dr. Miller expresses it in his work on this very subject,§ “with some zealous votaries of the hierarchy, that any particular form of government is in so rigorous a sense of *divine right* as to be essential to the existence of the church; so that where this form is wanting there can be no church. To adopt this opinion is to take a very narrow and unscriptural view of the covenant of grace.” In the introduction to the Form of Government these views in relation to other denominations and our own are *authoritatively* delivered. Hence, also, while asserting “that it is agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies,” it is added, “in full consistency with this belief, we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians

†Edinb. 1846.

‡Glasgow, 1841.

\*See form of licensure and of ordination of bishops or pastors, and evangelists; and also of ruling elders and deacons which, be it known and observed, is one and the same, and by the minister. *Form of Government*, chaps. xiii. xiv. xv.

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who differ from us, in opinion or in practice, on these points." *Form of Government*, chap. vii. § 1. And in the whole course and correspondence of our church she has held the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace with all evangelical denominations—Episcopalian, Lutheran, Reformed, Congregational, and Presbyterian. In his large, liberal, and catholic views every Presbyterian can cordially unite with Dr. Killen.‡ We rejoice in being members of a church of which no one can be *consistently* a member and be either a dogmatist or a sectarian or a bigot. With a catholic creed and catechism, and a church membership not requiring the adoption of all our standards, (which are bonds of *official* and not of *Christian* communion,) but only a profession of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; with liberty of conscience, liberty of opinion, and liberty of action, as her motto and her watchword; and acknowledging the principle of common right in every Christian church, or union, or association of particular churches, to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government; she is ever ready to unite, heart and hand, with all evangelical Christian churches, in all evangelistic efforts for the extension and glory of the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints.

In these principles of catholic communion, none more cordially unite than the advocates of the theory we have developed, and towards whom we cherish nothing but love and veneration and admiring regard. Differ we do, but our difference is not "disreputable." Charles I. was wont to say of Presbyterians, "Let them alone. They are only silly folks, and will be sure to quarrel among themselves." Let us not take up the proverb against ourselves. Let us agree to differ, and divide to conquer, attending to the apostolic rule—Whereto we are agreed let us walk by that same rule; let us mind the same thing, and God, in due time, will make plain to us everything in which we differ. And if we must differ about words, let us not make it a wordy strife.

‡See Preface and closing chapters.

ART. II.—*Theories of the Eldership—The Constitutional view of the Presbyterian Church.*

In a previous article we delineated the nature, and endeavoured to trace the progressive development of a recent theory of the Eldership, which, in various forms, has obtained considerable currency. Based upon the English or modern versions of the Scriptures, and the frequent use in them of such words as *elder* for the original word *presbyter*, and upon the now established use of the official title, *ruling elder*, it has all the advantage of apparently carrying with its premises its conclusion. That conclusion is, that ruling elders are "the presbyters" of Scripture, and "the presbyters who rule well" of the apostle; that ruling is therefore the fundamental office of the presbyter—its essence; that as the terms bishop, pastor, teacher, shepherd, watchman, overseer, leader, president, governor, steward, householder, ambassador, angel, are all used interchangeably with presbyter, whatever is set forth in the way of qualification and office concerning any one of these, is spoken primarily of ruling elders; that as preaching is also found to be characteristic of some of these variously described officers, there is a twofold order of elders, one class who only rule, and another who preach and rule—first rulers, and then preachers—rulers by the essence of their office, and preachers by a superadded charisma or gift; that "it is this distinction which gives us our name of 'The Presbyterian Church'—the church that holds to government by elders, the essence of whose office is ruling, and not teaching."\*

Such is the theory for which is claimed the indubitable authority of Scripture, the practice and writings of primitive Christianity, the sanction of ancient and reformed churches, and the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and the abettors of which say that the rejection of it "by many Presbyterians and Presbyterian ministers" is "disreputable," and proves that they are "very imperfectly acquainted with their own system." "The ruling elder, even in the decisions of the General Assembly, occupies a very anomalous position."

Now, the confusion we have found in every attempt to draw out this theory from Scripture, or state it in words, is its confutation. And when we remember that every prophet who expounds it has his own utterance different as well as distinct, and in some cases even contradictory and antagonistic, we use the language of Dr. Miller in reference to similar variations in the prelatie theory and among its defenders, when we affirm that "this very strife in their camp is a fatal testimony against their cause."† "When they contradict, with so little cere-

\*Dr. Adger's Inaugural Disc., Southern Presb. Review, 1859, pp. 165, 166.

†On the Christian Ministry, p. 60.



mony, both the letter and spirit of their own public offices, drawn up by martyred fathers of their church, rendered venerable by the lapse of nearly three centuries, it would really seem as if to them victory or defeat must prove equally fatal. If they fail of establishing their argument, their cause, of course, is lost. If, on the contrary, they succeed in establishing it, they dishonour the venerated authors of their formularies."

It will, at all events, be evident that the controversy, though about words, is not a mere logomachy, but involves all that is vital in the relations of the Eldership, the Ministry, and the Deaconship. This is the real question at issue. There is no manner of dispute whether the ruling elder is an officer, divinely appointed, deriving his authority from Christ the Lord; nor whether "he sits in Presbytery by divine right as a constituent element of the body;" nor even whether he may not be properly denominated, in a general use of the terms—ruling elder—and especially as the original word, *presbyter*, and its cognate words, *bishop*, *pastor*, *minister*, &c., are in general usage, and in our standards, restricted to the office of the preacher. The status, in short, the dignity, the ecclesiastical and spiritual character of the ruling elder as an office-bearer and ruler in the church of Christ, and as an essential element in Presbyterian polity;—these, none of them, are in question in this discussion. We claim, and it may be, shall establish, a greater honour for the ruling elder than this theory secures. We rejoice as much as any can rejoice, in every manifestation by our ruling elders of greater and growing interest in all that affects the prosperity of our church, and our heart's desire and prayer to God has been for thirty years, that he would send us ruling elders, able and willing to lead on and to sustain pastors in all pastoral visitation and instruction, and in the well-ordering and marshalling of the forces of the sacramental host.

What, then, is the Presbyterian view of the ruling eldership? It is very simple, and may be clearly stated, both negatively and positively.

And first, negatively. The ruling eldership is not the ministry, nor of the same order or office as the ministry, which is the highest both for dignity and usefulness. And as the ministry combines both teaching and ruling, and ruling in order to teaching, it is, on the last analysis, unquestionably the one fundamental order in the kingdom of Christ. On this point, we must omit a full exhibition of the decisive teaching of all Presbyterian standards. The remarkable harmony with which these all combine in exalting the ministry, in appropriating to the ministry the title of *presbyter*, and its collateral terms; in refusing so generally to give even the English term *elder* to our ruling elder, except under the explicit statement that it is in a "large" and comprehensive sense; the employment of *vari-*

ous other terms for the official standard definition of ruling elders; the *rejection* of the title, ruling elders, and 1 Timothy v. 17, as proof, after long discussion, by the Westminster Assembly, whose form of government is that of the Church of Scotland, and of all affiliated churches, and the basis of, and for a time itself, our own form;—all this is completely subversive of the theory in question, which makes the ministry a class under the order of ruling elders or a function of the office of ruling elders.

The ministry, according to the Presbyterian system of doctrine and polity, is a distinct ORDER, and not a CLASS under an order. It is also the FIRST order in the church, both for dignity and usefulness, and not “a new function” of a more fundamental order. It is the order to which an analysis of the church of Christ, either as a doctrine or as a duty, or as a dispensation of God’s gracious mercy, must ultimately lead—the instrumentality for making known authoritatively to lost and guilty men the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The ministry is the radical and essential order in the church. It contains within itself, by necessity, both discipline and distribution, both ruling and relieving, watchful care for the interests both of the body and the soul.\* The apostles accordingly are always named first, and all the other offices grow out of theirs, like branches from a common stock. The apostles were at the same time prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and at first had charge even of the business of the deacons. This universal official character belonged in the highest sense to Christ. He is expressly called apostle, prophet, evangelist, (Eph. ii. 17); calls himself the Good Shepherd; and condescends to take even the title of deacon or servant; and all the various branches of the spiritual office are the organs through which Christ himself, in the Holy Ghost, continues to exercise on earth the offices of prophet, priest, and king. According to this fundamental idea of the Presbyterian church, therefore, the pastor includes in his official potentiality, the elder and deacon, as the elder does that of deacon, and thus as a missionary or evangelist, the pastor can call together, and organize, and conduct churches, until God provides elders and deacons, whom he can then ordain.

Having thus shown what the system of the Presbyterian church in relation to the eldership is *negatively*, and that most assuredly it is not what this theory makes it, that is, the fundamental order of which the ministry is a class, or “a new function,” we proceed to state what it is *positively*. On this point there ought to be no disputation, as our standards are unmistakably clear. They deliver no uncertain sound. They separate the eldership by a definite order from the pastorship, and from the deaconship by a distinct consideration of each in sepa-

\*Gillespie argues this against Stillingfleet, and quotes older writers.

rate chapters. In our Form of Government (ch. v.) there has been even peculiar clearness of analysis, and we have both a lucid definition and a plain and popular *description* of ruling elders. In the definition we have first the *genus* or *class* to which ruling elders belong, viz. "the ordinary and perpetual officers in the church," (ch. iii.) of which there are *three kinds or orders*—(evangelists being properly considered as missionaries, and differing from ministers generally only in the nature and field of their work and not in office or order.) The *species* or *order* to which ruling elders belong, and the particular mark—or relation—by which this office is distinguished from each of the others, is their being "the representatives of the people (ch. iii.) ;" or, as it is more fully given in chapter v., "Ruling elders are *properly* the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline, in conjunction with pastors or ministers." Such is the *definition*. The *description*, as given in ch. iii. is, that they are those officers who are "*usually* (not *universally*) *styled* (not *are so by divine calling*, and hence not by divine right,) ruling elders." In ch. v. it is: "This office has been *understood* by a great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments and (*described in their works as*) those who rule well, but do not labour in word and doctrine."

We have here, therefore, a formal definition and a full description of ruling elders, and a candid admission that in regard to the name, and the application to that name of 1 Tim. v. 17, there has only been a "*common understanding*" (or *opinion*) by "a *great part*" of the churches. In the definition you will notice, that they are not called ruling *elders*, and that they are not—*here*, or anywhere else—called *presbyters*, which title is given exclusively to the bishop or pastor. And whereas "the *elders* that rule well," in 1 Tim. v. 17, is quoted in proof, it is to be noted, that it is only in support of the "commonly" used title, "*ruling elders*," for it lends no countenance whatever to the definition of "representatives of the people;" and also, that the suggestion of the name of *ruling elders* is founded upon the English rendering of "*rule well*," for οἱ καλῶς πρεσβύτῃς, (literally those who preside well or in an acceptable manner.)

Secondly, you will notice that they are "*properly* called representatives of the people," which bishops are neither said to be, nor can be. The *people* can neither give nor take away their office, their call, their commission, their authority, their power of loosing and binding, their gifts and graces, their status as *representatives*, heralds and ambassadors of *Christ*, as lights of the world, salt of the earth, stars in Christ's right hand, angels, rulers, stewards, husbandmen, fathers, shepherds,

builders, watchmen, the chariots and horsemen of Israel! ”\* Logically and efficiently, and in the order of the divine instrumentality, preachers precede believing people, and preaching is in order to discipleship, the shepherd to his flock, and the pastor to his people. There are, for instance, presbyteries in India, China, and elsewhere, where no suitable materials for elders or deacons exist, and where, therefore, ministers are in no proper sense representatives of the people. And as surely as there is a catholic visible church, there are ministers whose primary relations are to that church. As *ministers* they represent Christ and his kingdom, and as *pastors*, in the present strict sense of that term, by virtue of their relation to, and covenant with a particular church, they represent it. This principle constitutes the vital distinction between Presbyterianism and Independency, as Dr. Owen admits. Ruling Elders are common and proper to both, so that neither elders nor deacons constitute the distinctive characteristic of Presbyterianism.

And hence ruling elders are defined to be “*properly* representatives of the *people*,” because, as Dr. Adger well expounds, “*they are nothing more.*” They are, he adds, “specifically representatives of the people for the reason also, that not every elder in any district may be a member of Presbytery;” but “each session shall send one elder *only* to represent that session, and so to represent that church or people.”† Dr. Adger, however, is entirely mistaken in adding “with the minister,” as if the people sent the minister to Presbytery. Every ordained *minister* is, *ex officio*, a member of Presbytery which consists of all ministers, “and *ONE* ruling elder from every congregation within a certain district.” (Form of Gov. chap. x. § 2, See § 3-5.) “The pastor of the congregation also *shall always* be the moderator of the session, except when for some good reason some other *minister* be invited to preside.”

The fundamental relation of the ruling elder is, therefore, to the people. For while it is true that the apostles go before the church, not the church before the apostles; nevertheless, as soon as a Christian community was called, nothing was done without its co-operation. As all authority and power inhere in Christ, the autocratic King and Head, so does it pertain ministerially to his theocratic kingdom, or house, or family, or body, as it is severally called. The supreme government is upon his shoulders, who is head over all, and King of kings to his church. All power in the church, by whomsoever *exercised*, is made binding or loosing only by the authority of Christ, as constitutionally declared in his word. This power is not imparted primarily to officers, but to the church, considered as a kingdom, for whose edification officers are given. “Whatever

\*Divine Right of the Ministry.

†Inaugural Discourse, *Southern Presbyterian Review*. 1859, p. 175.



authority and dignity the Holy Spirit confers on priests, or prophets, or apostles, or successors of apostles, is wholly given *not to men themselves*, but to the ministry to which they are appointed, or to speak more plainly, to the word, to the ministry of which they are appointed.”\*

The Presbyterian system is distinguished from Popery, Prelacy, and Independency, by its belief in one holy catholic, visible church, UNTO WHICH Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God. (Conf. of Faith, chap. xxv.) Officers therefore are given to the church, and not the church to officers. Jesus Christ hath erected in this world a kingdom which is his church. (Form of Gov. ch. ii.) Our blessed Lord at first collected his church out of different nations, and formed it into one body by the mission of men.

This is a fundamental doctrine of the Presbyterian system. “The ministry, oracles and ordinances of Christ, are given† by” Jesus Christ to the general church visible. All church power is, therefore, resident ultimately in the body of the people, to whom was given the commission to evangelize the world. And as Christ greatly honours his people, calling them a royal generation, a holy priesthood, and the commonwealth of Israel, they have a right to a substantive part in the government of the church, through officers appointed by them, and by whom it is to be administered, according to the laws of the kingdom. This power extends to everything, whether pertaining to doctrine, discipline, or distribution, and to ministers also, and is only limited and restrained by the revealed will of the King of Zion. The church therefore in its visible form, is neither a democracy, nor an aristocracy, nor an autocracy, but a spiritual republic. It is a representative commonwealth, in which ministers represent God to the people and the people to God, and are in many ways subject to the direct and indirect control of the people, and in all cases are approved, elected, sustained, and supported by the people; in which ruling elders are properly representatives of the people; and in which deacons are representatives of both pastor and people to each other, and to the wants of a perishing world. In order however to avoid the use of any civil terms, our reformers have adhered to the original terms, kirk, pastors, elders, ancients or governors, and deacons. In Scotland, the first name adopted for this commonwealth was “The Congregation.”‡

According to this system, therefore, ALL the officers of the church are alike of divine appointment and authority, and their difference in importance, in dignity, and in usefulness, arises out of their relations to Christ and his people, and to the work assigned them. The office, and the gifts fitting for it, are in

\*Calvin's Instit. B. iv., Chap. viii. § 2.

†Form of Government, by the Westminster Assembly.

‡See Hetherington, History.

all cases, exclusively from Christ, and in the case of the minister the personal call is also from Christ, and when recognized and ratified by his existing ministers and elders in solemn convention, he is by them recommended to the people.

But it is very different with ruling elders. These are instituted for the special purpose of representing the people. By them the people exercise a popular and controlling influence in all the courts of the church, and in all spiritual government, discipline, and order, just as a similar control over all the temporalities, and charities, and funds of each church is wielded by the deacons, who also represent and act for the people in all this department of fiduciary power. This is the *essential* character of the ruling elder and deacon. They represent the inherent rights and prerogatives of the people as the free and loyal subjects of the King of Zion—the *elders* in their relation to the *whole church* as one body, of which all are members, and the *deacons* in their relation to a *particular church*.

According, therefore, to our Standards, ruling elders “act in the name of THE WHOLE CHURCH.” (Form of Government, ch. i. § 3.) The election, and the mode of their election, is left to each church. (Ibid. § 7, and ch. xiii. § 2.) When they become unacceptable to a majority of the congregation *to which they belong*, they may cease to be acting elders or deacons.” (Ibid. § 6.) They cease also to be officers when they remove to a different congregation, and require a new election and installation in order to be elders and deacons in it. Neither can an elder by virtue of office sit in any court of the church higher than his own church session, unless he is personally and regularly delegated by his session to represent their church in said body, and when said court adjourns, said commission and representation cease.

The ruling elder and deacon can do, officially, nothing which, if supposed to be acting directly, the church as a body could not rightly do; and can do nothing officially and regularly which is by the word made the peculiar and solemn duty of the minister.

Neither elders, nor deacons, nor people, nor all combined, can in the ordinary organized condition of the church call or ordain to the *office* of the ministry. They may call a man to become *their* minister, and to labour as *their pastor among them*. But he may be, and often is, already a minister—in the *office*—and if he is *not*, then other ministers must ordain him and install him with imposition of *their* hands. Though ruling elders are required to co-operate, as representatives of the people, in all the acts by which Presbytery examines and judges of the qualifications of a candidate for the ministry, and to approve or disapprove, yet such a thing as elders uniting in the imposition of hands in the ordination of a minister *has never been heard of*

*under the constitutional laws of any Presbyterian church in the world, so far as we can find.*

The ruling elder, according to our Standards, is neither ordained by imposition of hands, (See Form of Government, ch. xiii. § 4,) nor allowed to unite in imposing hands in the ordination of ministers, (ibid. ch. xv. § 14,) and the adequate reason is given by Dr. Miller.\* "It seems," says this venerated father of our church, "to be a fundamental principle in every department both of the natural and moral world, that every thing must be considered as capable of begetting its like," and in meeting the Episcopal objection against presbyterial ordination, "when it is well known that our Presbyteries are made up of clerical and *lay elders*, and that we do not permit the latter to impose hands at all in the ordination of ministers," he replies: "There is no inconsistency here. We deny the right of an *inferior* officer to lay on hands in the ordination of a superior, and uniformly act accordingly. The Presbytery lays on hands when all its teaching elders do, although those who are only rulers do not."† This is the law in the Church of Scotland—our mother church‡—in which ordination of elders is to be by the minister of the congregation, or by one of the Presbytery. "Then the elders chosen, still standing up, the minister is next by solemn prayer, to set them *apart in verbis de præsenti*."§ And in the same chapter on ruling elders, it is added, "The execution of some decrees of the church; *such as the imposition of hands*, the pronouncing the sentences of excommunication and absolution, &c., doth belong to pastors only."\*\* In the ordination of ministers accordingly, the several parties "are to sit together with the intrant, (or *pastor elect*) so that all the ministers may conveniently give him the imposition of hands, and the others (elders, heritors) may *take him by the hand when thereunto called*."†† In 1698 the Assembly passed the following remarkable act, which will explain itself: "The Assembly unanimously declare that as they allow no powers in the *people*, but only in the pastors of the church, to appoint or ordain church officers, so they disclaim the error of the press in Acts vi. 3, . . . bearing 'whom *ye* may appoint over this business,' instead of 'whom *we* may appoint,' . . . to prove the people's power in ordaining their ministers, which error the Presbyterians are wrongously charged with."‡‡

In the very first Book of Discipline which was one drawn up

\*Ruling Elders, p. 293.

†On the Ministry, p. 74.

‡Laws of the Church of Scotland, vol. i. p. 222. Pardovan, Book I. Title vii. § 1.

§Ibid. § 5.

\*\*Ibid. § 9.

††Ibid. Title i. § 34, p. 196.

‡‡Compendium of Laws of Church of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 202.

by Bullinger in 1536, and translated by Wishart in 1540, the ministers are called presidents, heads, and teachers, and ruling elders, *officers chosen by the minister or magistrate*, and only ministers imposed hands.\* "It (the election of ministers,) is well and justly approved by the voice of the church, and the imposition of the hands of the priests," i. e. presbyters. By the Second Book of Discipline, which continued in force in Scotland until the adoption of the Westminster Standards, the office of elders is made permanent, but the incumbents of it may rotate in the actual discharge of its functions, and it was not required that there should be an *eldership* in every church, but only in towns and famous places. This view of the eldership as held by the Reformers, is given by Dr. Miller, as the reason why, "although they with one accord retained this rite, (the laying on of hands,) in the ordination of Teaching Elders, they seem *quite as unanimously*, to have discarded it in the ordination of Ruling Elders."† Calderwood in his *Altare Damasce-num*, says, "the administrators of this rite are pastors—presbyters—only. Still the others will not thereby be excluded from Presbytery, because the laying on of hands does not belong to them. For the imposition of hands may be called the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, though each and every one of the presbyters have not the power of imposing hands. It is enough that the leading part of the Presbytery have that power, as the tribe of Levi is said to offer incense, when it was the prerogative of the priests only."‡

Alexander Henderson, in his treatise on Church Government, written two years before the Westminster Assembly, confirms this opinion. Rutherford, also, who was commissioned to that Assembly, not only affirms this to be the doctrine of the church, but confirms it by scriptural arguments.§ James Guthrie, of Sterding, in his treatise on Elders and Deacons, says this rite, and other prerogatives, "do belong to ministers alone."

The Westminster Form of Government was solemnly adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1645, and has ever since formed a part of their constitutional standards, and of all the branches of the Presbyterian Church affiliated with it throughout the world. Now, on the doctrine and order of ordination by imposition of hands, it is both explicitly and emphatically strong, having no less than six distinct sections on "The Ordination of Ministers," "Touching the Doctrine of Ordination," "Touching the Power or Ordination," "Concerning the Doctrinal part of the Ordination of Ministers," "The Directory for the Ordi-

\*Art. xviii. See in Miscellany of the Wodrow Society, Vol. 1, Art. 1. Edinb. 1844.

†On the Ruling Elder, p. 285-288.

‡Cap. xii. De administr. laicis, p. 689.

§Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbytery, p. 57.



nation of Ministers," and "The Rules for and Form of their Ordination;" and repeating over and over again, that "every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong." "Preaching presbyters, orderly associated, are those to whom imposition of hands doth appertain."\*

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in addition to the Westminster standards, have their own Constitution and Discipline. The form for ordination of ruling elders and ministers is very similar to that of the Church of Scotland. The elder is "set apart to his *office* by prayer only." (Ch. iii. § 2.) The minister is "ordained by prayer on the part of the minister appointed to ordain, the candidate reverently kneeling . . . in some part of the prayer the officiating minister shall lay his hands upon the head of the candidate, and be joined by the rest of the ministers present." (Ch. iv. § 14, p. 39.)

At a later period, the Church of Scotland, in allusion to the act of 1698, quoted above, reaffirmed that law. "Our church doth condemn any doctrine that *tends* to support the *people's* power of ordaining their ministers."†

We are thus full in our presentation of the Presbyterian system in the Church of Scotland on the question of ordination *of* and *by* ruling elders, because it not only determines her view of ruling elders to be, that they are *not* ministers, nor of the same order; but also because it determines the proper interpretation of their nature and powers.

But we can carry this authoritative constitutional interpretation of the nature and powers of ruling elders up to the very first standards of Presbyterianism—to the Institutes of Calvin, and to the standards and practice of the Waldensian, and other primitive churches of God.

Calvin did not originate the Presbyterian system, combining as it does the order of the ministers—the fundamental rulers and teachers of the church of God—with the orders of ruling elders and deacons.

All Calvin had to do was to complete the system by adding the bench of ruling elders, and even this he did not invent, but confessedly borrowed from that branch of the Waldenses called the "Bohemian Brethren."‡ This Zwingle had also done. Let us then hear on this subject the ancient discipline of the Waldenses: "God has given to his *people* to choose from themselves guides of the people, (*that is, pastors,*) and *ancients* in their carriages according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ;" and as it regards ordination, it is

\*See in every Scotch Confession of Faith, and all published elsewhere, except under our own Form of Government.

†Compendium of Laws, vol. i. p. 194. Pardovan, B. I. tit. 1, § 21.

‡Dr. Miller as above, p. 21.

expressly provided (Article 93,) that "*the body of the pastors of the church shall give the imposition of hands.*"† The Bohemian Brethren carried these ancient confessions and forms of discipline from Picardy, some two hundred years before the time of Huss.

The precise relation between the doctrine of our own standards, and these original ones on the subject of ruling elders, will be clearly perceived by quoting the original form of the language in which they were expressed by the Church of Scotland, which is as follows, "and it is also agreeable to, and warranted by, the word of God, that *some others* (not *ruling elders nor even elders*,) besides those who labour in the word and doctrine, be (*not ruling elders*, but) church governors to *join with* ministers of the word (*already presupposed and prescribed as rulers*) in the government of the church and discipline, which office-bearers Reformed churches do commonly call ruling elders."\*

Here also, it will be noted, we find, as in our book, a *definition*—"church governors to join with the ministers of the word in the government of the church," or as they are termed in section 4, "the representatives of that congregation;" and also a *description*, "which office-bearers Reformed churches do commonly call ruling elders."

We have now established, beyond dispute, the constitutional doctrine of the Presbyterian system concerning ruling elders on these points—that they are not ministers, nor of the same order of officers as ministers, that they are defined to be *properly*—that is, in their very nature or essential character—representatives of the people; that they are not officially, nor by divine assignation, the presbyters of Scripture who are ministers; that it is only "commonly," and in the common or "large" sense of the term, they are styled elders; that they represent, and cannot transcend the power ultimately inherent in, the people, to whom and for whose benefit they are instituted; that their power is strictly representative, and capable of exercise beyond their particular "people" only by special, personal, and temporary delegation, and may cease to be exercised even over that people in case they become unacceptable; that they are not as ministers are, *ex-officio*, necessary, and constant members of any superior court; and that they never have been ordained by imposition of hands, nor considered as officially capable of uniting in imposition of hands, in the ordination of ministers, by the constitution of any Presbyterian church in any part of the world.‡

†See given in Blair's History, in Appendix, in full; and also in Muston's recent able History in two vols. 8vo.

\*Compend. of Laws, vol. 1, p. 187. Pardovan, Title 1, Sec. 1.

‡"It was the practice of the Church for three hundred years to ordain

But further, the antagonism of the theory in question to the Presbyterian system will be made more manifest by proving *distinctly*—what is implied in the positions already established—the lay, or popular, and non-clerical character of ruling elders. Ruling elders are laymen—that is, as the word literally and in universal usage means—they are not clergymen, but are distinct from the clergy; individuals of the people who are not in orders. The term *laity* is altogether relative, be it observed, to *office* and *order*, and not to *dignity*, or *worth*, or *rank*. The layman may in all these respects be exalted, and the minister be humble and poor. The term only distinguishes that relation which the clergy sustain to God and to his sacred services which the laity do not. In any invidious sense, ruling elders are not laity; but neither are deacons, nor believers generally, for all are kings and priests unto God. But in every proper sense ruling elders are laymen, just as certainly as deacons are, since they are both called, elected, and ordained by the same formula. (*See Form of Government.*) It is idle work, therefore, to controvert this distinction, since it would only necessitate some other. The truth in the case was evidently this. In a high and holy sense all Christian people are *κληροί*, *cleroi*, or clergy, but ministers are in a peculiar and distinguishing sense, clergy. There is, therefore, an order of Christian laity as well as of Christian ministers or clergy, and it is in accordance with Christ's appointment that both orders should be represented in the government of the church, by a double class of officers, combining in the one, permanency and conservative wisdom as a Senate; and in the other, popular representation, prudence, activity, and authority, as a House of Representatives; united as one; acting as checks and balances to each other; coöperating as one court in everything common; and discharging, by each, everything peculiar to the character and office of each; and thus combining the greatest liberty with the highest security, and avoiding the extremes of a simple democracy and a spiritual hierarchy.

The defined nature of ruling elders, as properly the representatives of the people, implies and requires that they be laymen. A representative is one who bears the character, is clothed with the power, and performs the functions of others; who is one of them, united with them in interest, in power, and privilege, and chosen by them, from among themselves, to support their interests, and act in their name. Now if by becoming an elder, a man ceases to be a layman and becomes a clergyman, then he is no longer properly a representative of

bishops or presbyters with imposition of hands of neighboring bishops or presbyters." (Jus. Div. Regim. Eccl. p. 60.) Elders not sixty, ordained. (See Pref.)

the people, and the Presbyterian government ceases to be representative, and a free commonwealth, and becomes a clerical aristocracy, or in other words, a hierarchy. In their original form, as found in all modern and reformed churches, as among the Waldenses, in Switzerland at Geneva, in France, in Scotland, elders were unquestionably laymen, chosen from the civil state and not from the ecclesiastical, *and by the civil authorities* in many cases, as by the Confession of the churches of Switzerland, and the first adopted in Scotland. Blair,\* "one of the most profound writers on the Waldenses," as Dr. Miller justly styles him, (on Presbyterianism, p. 18, 19,) "points out the difference between the lay elders of the Waldenses and of the Church of Scotland, by stating that the former were chosen by the Waldensian *congregations*, meeting annually and appointing the elder." "Calvin," says Principal Hill, "in 1542, admitted *lay* elders into his church.† The admission of *lay* elders into church courts having the sanction of these early authorities, Calvin thought it expedient to revive the primitive practice as an effectual method of preventing the return of inordinate power in a *superior order of clergy*. With some variation of name and privilege, the office of *lay* elders is found in all the Presbyterian churches on the Continent. Ever since the Reformation it has formed an essential part of the constitution of the church of Scotland." (*View*, pp. 24, 25.) "The Kirk session is composed of the minister of the parish, who is *officially* moderator, and of *lay* elders." P. 48. "The Presbytery is composed of the ministers of all the parishes within its bounds, and of *lay representatives* from the consistories." P. 26. Speaking of these lay elders as assisting the minister in everything which concerns discipline, Principal Hill adds, "They are called *laymen* in this respect, that they have no right to teach or to dispense the sacraments, and on this account they form an *office* in the Presbyterian church, *inferior in rank and power to that of pastors*." Ibid. p. 23.

The very learned Vitringa, in his elaborate treatise on the Ancient Synagogue, in discussing the question of ruling elders as maintained by Calvin, and as commonly adopted in his own church, uniformly styles them *presbyteros laicos*. (See p. 484.)

That ruling elders have already been considered as laymen in every branch of the Presbyterian church, will be clearly seen further, from the variety of names by which they have been called. In the Syrian churches of Malabar, the Romish inquisitor addressed them as "representatives and procurators of the people."‡ In the laws of Geneva they are called in-

\*In vol. ii. p. 540, he calls them *lay*, five times.

†View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, by George Hill, D. D., Principal of St. Andrews College, third edition, p. 23.

‡See the Confession imposed on them in Hough's Christianity in India, vol. iv. Append. p. 515.



spectors, seniors, and commissioners for the Seniory.”† Among the Waldenses they received the names of rulers, ancients, and elders; among the Bohemians, of guides, elders, and censors; by Commenius they are called “seniors, judges of the congregation, or censors of the people.” Æcolampadius styles them elders of another kind, that is, “senators, leaders, and counselors.” In the Helvetic Confession, “The elders are the agents, as it were the senators and fathers of the church, governing it by holy counsel.”‡ In the Books of Discipline, no one term is employed, but several, such as seniors, other governors, elders. In the Westminster Standards, and in the notes preserved by Gillespie, they are spoken of as—ruling officers—other church governors, *ruling* elder or others, church governor, others to join in government.” We have not found the full term “ruling elder,” until about the time of the Westminster Assembly, when it is introduced and reprobated in speeches preserved by Neal,§ and is used in the commission given by the Church of Scotland to its delegates to that Assembly. After ten days of elaborate discussion in the Westminster Assembly, both names, *elder* and *ruling elder*—were abandoned, and “other church governors,” and as in ch. on Presbytery, “other public officers,” were adopted. In the early churches in the United States, many had no elders.\*\* They were frequently called “assistants, representatives of the people, and sometimes the minister’s assistants, representatives of congregations.”††

The lay character of ruling elders is not trivial nor unimportant. It is fundamental to the Presbyterian system and to the true character and importance of the ruling eldership. It is their lay character which brings the lay element into our form of government and imparts voice and power to the people; indeed gives into their hands the *controlling* power in particular churches and sessions, and *equal* power in every other court and in every department. These lay representatives constitute the house of representatives united with the senate in one body in all the courts of our church.

“Our divines,” says Mr. George Gillespie in his Assertion of the government of the Church of Scotland, Part I. chap. 4, “prove against papists that some of these, whom they call laics, ought to have a place in the assemblies of the church, by this argument among the rest; because otherwise the whole church could not be thereby represented. And it is plain enough, that the church cannot be represented, except the hearers of the word, which are the far greater part of the church, be repre-

†See Name, Nat. and Functions, of Elders, p. 11.

‡See *ibid.* and *auth.* pp. 78, 79, 80, 84, 86, and *Harmony of Confessions.*

§See *Hist. of Puritans*, vol. i. and Appendix.

\*\*Hodge, *Constit. Hist.*, i. p. 96, 97.

††Do. 95, see example.

sented. By the ministers of the word they cannot be represented more than the burghs can be represented in parliament by the noblemen, or by the commissioners of shires; therefore by some of their own kind must they be represented, that is, by such as are hearers, and not preachers. Now some hearers cannot represent all the rest except they have a calling and commission thereto; and who can these be but ruling elders? And again, when the Council of Trent was first spoken of in the Diet at Wurtemberg, Anno 1522, all the estates of Germany desired of Pope Adrian VI. that admittance might be granted, as well to *laymen* as to clergymen, and that not only as witnesses and spectators, but to be judges there. This they could not obtain, therefore they would not come to the council, and published a book, where they allege this for one cause of their not coming to Trent, because none had voice there but cardinals, bishops, abbots, generals, or superiors of orders, whereas *laics* also ought to have a decisive voice in councils. If none but the ministers of the word should sit and have a voice in a synod, then it could not be a church representative, because the most part of the church (who are the hearers and not the teachers of the word) are not represented in it. A common cause ought to be concluded by common voices. But that which is treated of in councils, is a common cause pertaining to many particular churches. Our divines, when they prove against papists, that the election of ministers, and the excommunication of obstinate sinners, ought to be done by the suffrages of the whole church, make use of this same argument; that which concerneth all, ought to be treated of and judged by all."

So argued one of Scotland's noblest sons, and a representative in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. And such, also, are the general views of the early fathers of the Presbyterian church. (See Jamieson's Cyprianus Isotimus, pp. 554-556, 540-544.)

One of the ablest and most effective works written in favour of the Presbyterian system, in 1641, two years before the Westminster Assembly, and by some who were members of that body, was what—by the union of the initial letters of the names of its combined authors—was called Smectymnuus. "By all these testimonies," they say, (at the close of their argument for governing elders, whom they call *lay presbyters* and *lay elders*) "it is apparent, first, that in the ancient church there were some called *seniors*. Secondly, that these seniors *were not clergymen*. Thirdly, that they had a stroke in governing the church and managing the affairs thereof. Fourthly, that the seniors were distinguished from the rest of the people." P. 74.

We need not do more than refer to the biennial election of elders in the Dutch Church, and to the character of the eldership in the French and Swiss Churches.\*

It is very remarkable that the proofs given by Dr. Killen for his theory from the Synagogue, prove also that if similar to the Parnasim, elders must be laymen. "In every synagogue," as he quotes from Lightfoot, "there was a *civil* triumvirate, that is, three *magistrates*, who judged of all matters in contest, advising within that synagogue." "The same writer," adds Dr. Killen, "declares that in every synagogue there were elders that ruled in *civil affairs* and elders that laboured in word and doctrine."† Dr. Miller admits all that we desire. 1. That the earliest fathers distinguished ministers by the title of *clergy*, and the people by that of *laity*. 2. That in the time of Cyprian this use was general. 3. That the name of clergy was given to presbyters and deacons, and to any others who in the growing multiplication of orders were *ordained by imposition of hands*. 4. That this distinction is found even in Scripture. (Acts iv. 13.) 5. That in any *invidious* sense, ruling elders are not laymen, nor ministers, prelates or popes. 6. But that "so far as it is intended to designate those who are clothed with office and authorized to discharge important spiritual functions which the body of church members are not authorized to perform, and to mark the distinction between these two classes, the language may be defended, and that either that (*i. e.* laity) or some other of equivalent import, *ought to be*, and *must be used*, if we would be faithful to the New Testament view of ecclesiastical office as an ordinance of Christ." "Let all necessary distinction be made by saying, ministers or pastors, ruling elders, deacons, and the laity or body of the people." (Ruling Elders, pp. 211, 212.) Amen. So let it be.‡

We are not left to put any sense possible or plausible upon our Book of Government. "Our whole arrangement of judicatories, and *our whole ecclesiastical nomenclature*, are, with few exceptions, borrowed from Scotland," and although "Presbyterianism in Scotland, Holland, France, Geneva, and Germany, are in substance the same . . . yet as those who commenced the Presbyterian church in America were chiefly emigrants from North Britain and Ireland, so the Church of Scotland was more than any other their model." Thus speaks

\*See Lorimer on Eldership, p. 165.

†Lightfoot's Works, xi. 179, Killen, pp. 233, 234.

‡Several names are employed in Scripture to denote the body of the Christian people, such as *brethren—one heritage—disciple*, as opposed to *Master*—taught, as opposed to teachers—soldiers and leaders—ὁ λαός, *the people*—ποιμνιον, *the flock, the church*—private persons, ιδιωται—and later, βιωτιχοι, *laymen, or men devoted to secular pursuits*.



Dr. Miller, who must be considered as being himself one of the most venerated fathers and upbuilders of our church.†

This constitutional interpretational authority of the Westminster standards is confirmed by the fact that, as Dr. Archibald Alexander remarks, "the *immediate* mother of our American Presbyterian Church was the Synod of Ulster, from one of whose Presbyteries, the Lagan, the Rev. Francis Mackemie, its founder, was formally commissioned and ordained to labour in this country. Now, in a minute of the Synod of New York in 1751, it is said: "We do hereby declare and testify our constitution, order, and discipline to be in harmony with the established Church of Scotland. The Westminster Confession, Catechisms, Directory for Public Worship, and *Church Government*, adopted by them, are *in like manner* received and adopted by us. We declare ourselves united with that church in the same faith, order, and *discipline*.\*

In conclusion, on this point, we remark, that either ruling elders are laymen, or deacons are not; and that if deacons are laymen, then ruling elders must be also, since both are elected and ordained by the same formula, word for word—(see *Form of Government*)—and therefore since deacons are universally recognized as lay officers in the church, so also are ruling elders. They are both laymen, and so understood and felt to be by themselves, by the church, and by the world—chosen from the people and by the people, to represent the people; and separated from them by no form of ordination peculiar to the sacred order of the ministry.

But we proceed to remark, that ruling elders and deacons, though laymen, are not incumbents of a *lay office*, nor *lay officers*, in the sense of being originated or authorized by man. They occupy a divinely instituted office, and are clothed by divine right with all the dignity and honour of ecclesiastical officers. In other words, they are authorized by Scripture and by sound reasoning from established scriptural truths, and are agreeable to, and approved by, scriptural examples, and by its general teaching.‡

It is also to be remarked that this view of the office of the elder is the only one which gives a proper explanation of the nature and functions of ruling elders. Whatever can promote the spiritual interests of the people, preserve their rights, and secure their prosperity, peace and purity, and the godly up-bringing of the children of the church—all this pertains to the

†See "Presbyterianism the truly Prim. and Apostolic Church," pp. 21, 22.

\*See in Hodge's Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 18, and his multiplied proofs of the fact.

‡A divine right is supported by any one of these arguments. See Dr. McLeod's Eccl. Catech., p. 12, Q. 39, and note. Also, Jus. Div. Regiminis Eccl., ch. i.



eldership, and is expected from them, according to their several ability and opportunity.

This view gives to the eldership the power of the church in a very large measure, and to the church itself its popular representative character. This view gives to the church also its spiritual character. As elders are, the church will be; and as elders are, the ministry itself will, in all ordinary cases be; and either be as greatly hindered in what they would be, or helped in all they would accomplish. Elders can vitalize and popularize the church. There are no limits to their usefulness. They are the palladiums of the church's liberty and rights, and the preservers of its purity, both of doctrine and of life.

Such then is the Presbyterian theory of the eldership, as found in its standards, and in the history and practice of every Presbyterian church. The question, therefore, between this and the new theory is not, what *ought* to be, but what is *constitutional*—not what might be constitutionally altered, if a better is pointed out; nor even what is most scriptural, and most authoritatively maintained; but simply what is the Presbyterian system as it regards ruling elders? and are Presbyterian ministers and officers under solemn and covenant engagement bound to maintain and preserve it?

Is this then, we ask, the theory of the Presbyterian church in these United States on the subject of the eldership? The answer can be definitely given. That our church does not hold the theory propounded by Dr. Breckinridge, Dr. Thornwell, Dr. Adger and others, is admitted. "The ruling elder," says Dr. Thornwell,\* "even in the decisions of the General Assembly occupies a very anomalous position, and it is still disputed† whether he belongs to the *same order with the minister*, or whether the minister alone is the presbyter of Scripture, and the ruling elder a subordinate assistant. It is still disputed whether he sits in presbytery as the deputy of the brotherhood, or whether he sits there by divine right as a constituent element of the body; whether as a member of presbytery, he can participate in ALL presbyterian acts (*i. e. ordinations, &c.*) or is debarred from some by the low nature of his office."

Now, passing by the invidious imputation of a design to lower the eldership by magnifying, as the apostles do, the high calling of the ministry, we have in this statement a full admission of the fact, that the theory of Dr. Breckinridge, which he adopts, is in antagonism to the Presbyterian system as interpreted by our General Assembly.

For three successive years (1842-1844,) our General As-

\**Southern Presbyterian Review*, October 1859, p. 615.

†What is not at all disputed by the church, is here omitted.

sembly was agitated by overtures to allow ruling elders to unite in the imposition of hands in the ordination of bishops. "The denial of this right," it was alleged by those who protested, "involved the denial that they are scriptural presbyters, which denial seems to us to undermine the foundations of Presbyterian order."\* In accordance with the *unanimous* report of the Committee, the General Assembly resolved, "that in its judgment, neither the constitution nor the practice of our church authorizes ruling elders to impose hands in the ordination of ministers," (yeas 138, nays 9); and in a long and able reply to a long and able protest, the Assembly in 1844,† says: "These views are contrary to Scripture, and to the constitution of our church, and to the practice of our own and all other Presbyterian churches, and tend to subvert the office of ruling elder, by confounding it with that of the minister of the word. It was the doctrine of the Independents, and not of Presbyterians, that ruling elders had the right to impose hands in the ordination of ministers, as could be abundantly shown from authorities not to be questioned. In favour of the decision of the Assembly, or rather of the last three Assemblies, it can be shown, 1. That the decision accords with the word of God; 2. With the very words of our constitution; 3. With the uniform practice of those who framed the constitution; 4. With the uniform practice of all other Presbyterian churches; and we cannot but express the hope that a matter which has been decided, after a full and careful examination, by our whole church, and by such large majorities, may be considered as settled, and that it will not be made a subject of further agitation."

The question, therefore, which theory of the eldership is the Presbyterian system, according to the deliberate and almost unanimous judgment of our church, against the ablest opposition, and during three successive years of agitation, is **no** longer an open question, nor one of doubtful disputation. The positions here affirmed have to this day never been assailed. If the new theory of the protestors is the Presbyterian system, let the *proof* be given.

In another and closing article we will examine the grounds assumed as the basis of the new theory, and after proving that it has no foundation in Scripture, exhibit its tendency to destroy Presbyterianism, the ministry, the eldership, and the deaconship.

\*Protest, Baird's Digest, p. 77.

†By a vote of 154 to 25.

ART. III.—*The recent Theory of the Eldership examined.*

The ruling elder according to this theory is the *presbyter* of Scripture and of the Christian church in the early period of its history. It is the one fundamental order of which the preacher is a class—a functionary—who, by virtue of an additional gift, performs different duties, “but is by no means of a different order.” There is, therefore, but one order of rulers in the church—deacons being only assistants or helps.

According to Dr. Breckinridge and Dr. Thornwell this theory involves all that is essentially distinctive of Presbyterian government.\* The issues are therefore of vital import. The theory is dogmatically “affirmed” to be sustained by arguments “clear, conclusive, and irresistible.” (*Review*, p. 7.) “The Scriptures and our Standards both EXPRESSLY teach that the ruling elder is strictly and properly a presbyter, and therefore entitled to participate in all the acts—(of necessity he would be)—in which any presbyter, *as such*, can bear a part.” (*Ib.* p. 57.) “The presbyter, as a title of office, means a ruler, and *nothing more* than a ruler.” (*Ib.* p. 58.) This “is clear from the passage which proves *beyond the possibility of a doubt*, that presbyters and ministers of the word are not synonymous terms. That passage is 1 Tim. v. 17.” (*Ib.* p. 61.) “From the account given of the meaning of this word it follows, that it is not applicable to preachers as ministers of the word.” (*Ib.* p. 66.) In support of these strong affirmations we are referred to the Old Testament, to the synagogue, to the plurality of elders in every church, and to the above text, and the subject is urged upon us by the solemn asseveration, that “these surely are not slight questions—they affect the very heart of our system—and in deciding them we settle the distinctive principles of our government.” (*Ib.* p. 35.)

We will now proceed to examine in detail the grounds on which, scripturally and historically, this theory is based. With every possible effort to condense, and omitting much we might advance and have even written, we must task the patience of our readers. But as we can only oppose facts to authority, we may reasonably hope that all interested in the question of the true value of the ruling eldership will give to our argument a calm and dispassionate consideration. This is all we ask. To the law and testimony of God’s word, and to our Presbyterian Standards is our confident appeal.

\*See *The Christian Pastor* and Appendix, by Dr. Breckinridge, Baltimore, 1845, and *The Elder Question*, by Dr. Thornwell, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, June, 1848.

*Meaning of the term Presbyter, i. e. πρεσβυτερος.*

The fundamental position on which this theory is based is that the essence of the presbyter is rule, and that the fundamental meaning of the term presbyter is a ruler.

Let us then first inquire into the original meaning of the term *presbyter*.

Presbyter (πρεσβυτερος) does not primarily mean a ruler. It is the comparative degree of πρεσβυς, old, an old man, and means older, an older man, and has a superlative πρεσβυτατος, oldest, the oldest man. The word came to have the sense of reverend, or honoured, from the great respect paid in early ages to the aged and experienced, and especially to parents. The secondary meaning of the word, according to Passow, is an ambassador, and it is only in its third derivative sense it means, as it did at Sparta, a political title—a ruler. In this as well as in the other sense, it is found in some analogous form in almost every language, and very commonly in the Hebrew, and among the sacred race, whose history is preserved in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Precisely the same is the case with the Latin word *senior*—the term, be it remembered, which was employed by the African Fathers, by Calvin, and Knox, by the Books of Discipline, and by the Waldenses. *Senior* is also the comparative degree of *senex*, old, and means older, and is generally applied to age, and to the respect and endearment associated with age, and not to office or rule. Senator and not senior is the Latin term for the members of the Roman Senate, whose position was not considered an office, but rather a dignity or rank like that of the *nobili* of Venice.

*The Presbyters of the Old Testament—What?*

This theory finds no support, therefore, from the primary and fundamental meaning of the terms *presbyter*, in Greek, and *senior*, in Latin. It is however affirmed, that the elders of the Old Testament, and of the ancient synagogue, were, *as this theory requires, of one order as rulers, of whom there were two classes*—one of rulers only, and one of rulers who were teachers also; and that these were not laymen, but ecclesiastics, who were both ordained, and ordainers by imposition of hands. Our Saviour and his apostles, it is said, found this theory of the eldership in practical operation, and transferred it to the Christian church. Let us then take up these positions.

On the real use and import of the term *elder*, and its Hebrew cognates, we regard the work of the now late and deeply lamented Dr. J. Addison Alexander on “The Primitive Offices of the Christian Church,” to be exhaustive. He illustrates its



use "from the very beginning of time, in all countries, under every variety of government, and under all changes in the form of government. It belongs, in short, to the phraseology of the patriarchial constitution of the earliest societies, and is employed in Scripture in application to the elders of Egypt, of Midian, of Moab, &c.; and not only to elders of countries, but also to local magistrates and judges." (P. 5, &c.) In all cases, these elders "were representatives of the people," and are frequently "taken for the people," and "for ALL the people." (P. 4, 5.) They were also the representatives of the people in civil and in sacred things. "The people therefore were originally and properly the chief depositaries of the governing power. They were convened and consulted on all important occasions, and without their consent nothing could be lawfully done;" and hence, what the elders did was spoken of as done by the people.

But these elders among the Jews were not their established religious *teachers*. Enoch preached and prophesied of Christ. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Such also were Abraham, Jacob, Job, Moses, and all the prophets, the spirit of whose prophecy was its testimony to Jesus. Those became "accredited agents and messengers," the immediate representatives of God, and mediators between God and man. But besides these, a particular order was set apart to be the teachers and priests of the people *with whom* the elders were *associated* in the government and discipline of the church. From the beginning to the end, therefore, the elders were lay representatives of the people, and under the theocracy were entirely distinct from the sacred order of teachers and preachers.

Preaching, therefore, was not "a new function superadded by our Saviour to the old office of elder," so as to constitute a subdivision under it. Teaching and preaching had always constituted a fundamental office in the church of God, and also in the synagogue. And it has ever been the doctrine of the Presbyterian church that in these ancient ministers of the word, the Christian ministry was represented and foretold according to the typical nature of the ancient economy. That the priests and Levites in the Jewish church were entrusted with the public reading of the word, praying, preaching, teaching, blessing the people, &c., is affirmed by the Westminster Form of Government, which says, "The ministers of the gospel have as ample a charge and commission to dispense the word, as well as other ordinances, as the priests and Levites had under the law; see Isaiah lxvi. 21, and Matt. xxiii. 34, where our Saviour entitleth those whom he will send forth, by the same names of the teachers of old." Again, quoting Numb. vi. 23—26, with Rev. xiv. 5, and Isaiah lxvi. 21, it is said—"Where under the

names of priests and Levites, to be continued under the gospel, are meant evangelical pastors." And again—"As there were in the Jewish church *elders of the people* who joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the church, so Christ also hath instituted government and *governors* to join with the ministers," &c. (See *Form of Government* in Confession of Faith of Church of Scotland, pp. 388—391, Edinburgh edition.)

Preaching was not, therefore, as Dr. Breckinridge affirms, "a new function manifested among the elders unknown to those of the Jews," but only an old function which, like the law of brotherly love, became a new commandment by the new authority, and motives, and sphere of Christ's kingdom. Nay, Dr. Breckinridge himself, in the same chapter, teaches that "the worship of the synagogues consisted in the reading and *expounding* of God's word, and in offering up prayers to him." (*Knowledge of God*, vol. ii. pp. 631 and 634.) It is also evident that the ministers of the New Testament are not the successors of the *elders* of the Old Testament, but of a separate and sacred order of preachers and expounders of God's will and word. Vitringa, in his learned work on the ancient synagogue proves at length that it had regularly ordained preachers.\*

#### *The Presbyters of the Synagogue.*

The argument for this theory, founded on the supposed analogy of the Jewish Synagogue, though assumed by Dr. Breckinridge to be conclusive, will not, therefore, avail to its support. (See *Knowledge of God*, vol. ii. p. 621.) In the first place, while the synagogue *was*, in all probability, the model and basis of the first Christian churches, nevertheless to suppose that this was the case, not only in its *general* form and order, but in a slavish imitation, is, as Lytton well observes, (*On the Church*, p. 193,) "neither consistent with recorded facts nor with the spirit of the Christian dispensation." Secondly, it is impossible to ascertain *what was the polity* and order of the synagogue in our Saviour's time, or to harmonize the remaining statements of Rabbinical lore into any definite system. There is much confusion and contradiction, so that the most patient investigators into the originals—such as Maimonides, Buxtorf, Vitringa, Selden, Lightfoot, and Schœttgenius—contradict each other and themselves, and confess that much is a matter of the most doubtful disputation.†

Vitringa has shown that there was no one constant form of synagogue government, but that it differed according to cir-

\*See Book III. chap. v. vi. and vii.

†See Dr. Miller on Eldership, pp. 35-48, and his frank admissions that his authorities are against him, and at no agreement among themselves, pp. 45, 46; or Killen's Ancient Church, p. 252. Vitringa exposes the views of Lightfoot, Selden, Petitus *doctissimus*, Capellus, &c.

cumstances and places, and that of these various modifications the one adopted for the government of the Apostolic church was a *Senatus plurimum Doctorum qui quoddam Consistorium sive Presbyterium constituerunt*.\*

That the universal Jewish appellative term *elders* was given to some of their officers, sometimes to all, sometimes to a select number, may be admitted. But that *any* of these elders were invested with the clerical order is denied by Stillingfleet† and others, while that the term *elder* was given in any other than the *most general* sense to those who did not preside and preach, is denied by perhaps all the original authorities. Vitranga is of this opinion, and establishes, he thinks clearly, that the term rendered by *presbyter* was properly employed by the Hebrew writers to designate "those who composed the sacred consistory of doctors or teachers. This consisted always of a plurality of these learned doctors, but the exact number depended on the size of the place, the number of such doctors convenient, and other circumstances."‡ Selden corroborates this judgment by proving, as he thinks, that the powers of presbyters, within and without the Holy Land, were different, and that the former combined teaching and ruling, while the latter had power to teach, to bind, to loose, to prophesy only, and were *non in judicandi creati*. He also teaches that just as in every large city there were many synagogues, so also there were many Christian churches and presbyters.§ The sum of what is admitted, so far as we can gather it, may be briefly stated as follows:

1. The elders of the synagogue represented the people, and "were laymen of reputed wisdom and experience, who, in practical matters, might be expected to give sound advice." (*Dr. Killen's Ancient Church*, p. 252.) They formed "a lay council." (*Id.* p. 232.) In this respect, therefore, the elders of the Synagogue were essentially different from those defined by this theory. According to Lightfoot they were "magistrates who judged in matters in contest arising within the Synagogue" and who "ruled in civil affairs." (*Quoted as authority by Dr. Killen*, pp. 233, 234.)

2. These elders of the synagogue were not ordained. Vitranga, after stating the difficulty of understanding clearly the views of even Maimonides, and differing in interpretation with Lightfoot, says: "Perhaps we may conclude this much, that while the affairs of the Hebrews flourished in Canaan, the presidents and ministers of the synagogue, who depended for

\*See Book ii. Ch. xii., p. 592, &c.

†See Dr. Miller on Eldership, pp. 45, 46.

‡See Vet. Synag. Book iii. Ch. i. and Ch. xviii. p. 874.

§Selden de Synag. Vet. Ebræorum vol. ii., lib. ii., ch. vii. pp. 329, 325, 252, 319, 320, *et passim*.



their support upon the synagogue, were confirmed in their office by imposition of hands.”\* Lightfoot, speaking of their preachers, says: “None of these were admitted to his public employment of teaching and preaching, but he had ordination as a state call and commission to that office.”† “And therefore,” says Maimonides, “it was far from being a common use, *from being any use at all*, among the Jews, in their church, to let any mechanical or unordained man step up into the doctor’s chair, or minister’s pulpit, to read divinity publicly, or to preach in their synagogues, as impudency or folly would put them forward to do it; but they had a solemn state call . . . by a lawful ordination, by men themselves ordained. *Only* these rabbis, doctors, or bishops, were ordained.”‡

3. The Hebrew word, translated *elders*, was given to these teachers, preachers, or presidents, only in conjunction with other titles, which made its restrictive official application apparent. These elders laboured in word and doctrine, and conducted the exercises of public worship, prayers, and exposition of the Scriptures. They were also called by the title, *αρχισυναγωγοι*. (Compare Luke vii. 8, and Mark v. 22, Acts xiii. 15.) One of these presided in turn, or according to arrangement. (Luke viii. 41, 49, Mark v. 22.) From this last passage, and Acts xiii. 15, and xviii. 8, 17, it appears that there was a plurality of these in one synagogue. Maimonides describes the bishop, or presiding officer of the synagogue, as “the presbyter, who laboured in word and doctrine.” Neander says, “while all the officers of the synagogue were elders, those who presided were called, among other names, *προεστώτες τῷ ἀδελψῶν*, that is, presidents over or of their brethren.”§ This president was also called *chazan*, angel, bishop of the congregation. “This person,” says Lightfoot—“the public minister of the synagogue, who prayed publicly, preached, &c.—was called the angel of the church, and *chazan*, or bishop of the congregation; and certainly the signification of the word bishop (and presbyter,) or angel of the church, would have been determined with less noise, if recourse had been made to the upper fountains. . . . The service of the temple being abolished as being ceremonial, God transplanted the worship and public adoration of God used in the synagogue, which was moral, into the Christian church—to wit, the public ministry, public prayers, reading of God’s word, preaching, &c. Hence the names of the ministers of the gospel were the very same—the

\*De Vet. Synag. p. 837, 838.

†Works, vol. v., p. 121, 122.

‡See in Lightfoot, *ib.* Bernard Synag. of the Church, 85, 86, 169, 183.

§Maim. De Sanh., chap. iv. Neander, Planting of Christ, vol. i., p. 177.



angel of the church and the bishop (or presbyter,) *which belonged to the ministers* of the synagogue.”†

In every particular, therefore, in which anything like agreement can be found, the synagogue theory of the eldership was in harmony with that of our church, and contrary to that now challenging its adoption. We find, therefore, that in the Westminster Assembly, Selden and Lightfoot, and out of it, Vitringa, and other Hebraists, were in opposition to it.

*The Presbyter of the New Testament.*

Let us then proceed to an investigation of the real presbyter of the New Testament, and the *usus loquendi* of the title.

With the termination of the civil theocratic commonwealth of the Jews, ceased also their ceremonial and typical economy, and it became necessary that around its permanent laws, rites, and religion, Christ, by his apostles, should re-organize a government and discipline adapted to the simplicity and spirituality of the church, as God's instrumentality for the conversion of the world. The very first act of Christ's public ministry was therefore the institution of the sacred order of the ministry, as his representatives, heralds, and ambassadors. This, also, was his last act upon earth, when in commissioning his church, he made the preaching of the gospel its fundamental business, and preachers its essential rulers; and when Christ ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men, pastors and teachers—that is, the sacred order of the ministry in its two fold work of oversight or rule, and instruction—was the all comprehending permanent order which he instituted in his church. Around this order, to secure to it greater efficiency, more certain purity, and popular adaptation, there were gathered, from time to time, as occasion opened up the way for their institution, the order of BRETHREN, called also *governments*, and *rulers*, to represent and act for the people in conjunction with the order of ministers; and besides them, the order of deacons to act under, and in co-operation with both in the government and administration of the church.

It is, therefore, most assuredly to be expected that the order of the ministry, which is so fundamental, will be designated by titles and qualifications *peculiar* to itself. In this way alone can its divine institution, dignity, and usefulness be adequately set forth. And as the term presbyter is among other titles employed to represent the ministry and its qualifications, there is a most violent presumption against this theory which applies that term primarily, in its most official and distinctive meaning, to the same class of officers which are otherwise specially designated brethren, rulers, and governors.

†Works, vol. ii. pp. 88, 89; and Bernard, chap x.

The proper official meaning of the term *presbyter* in the New Testament, when not employed evidently in its derivative general sense, may be ascertained by considering its use in those passages which are the most clear and unambiguous. The conclusion arrived at by Dr. J. Addison Alexander, in his work on "The Primitive Officers of the Church," is the same as that reached by every other analyst of Scripture;—by Dr. Owen, and all modern Congregationalists; by Methodists and non-Episcopal denominations; and by a large body of Episcopalian writers and critics; namely—that "presbyters, as PRESBYTERS, possessed and exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry." (P. 29.) They preached; they administered the sacraments; they presided over and conducted all public services. They ordained also other ministers and other officers. From a very thorough examination of the Council at Jerusalem, (Acts xv.;) the address of Paul to the presbyters at Ephesus, (Acts xxviii.;) the address of Peter, (1 Pet. v.;) and from the order of other churches mentioned in the New Testament, Dr. Alexander concludes—in opposition to the claims of prelates to be an order of ministers higher than presbyters—"that *the presbyterial office* was, as they admit, established in the primitive church, and was intended to be permanent; that it was clothed with the important powers of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments; and that it is repeatedly spoken of in terms which, taken by themselves, would imply the possession of the highest powers belonging to the ministry . . . including those of discipline and ordination." (Pp. 66, 67.) "How could *they*," asks Dr. Alexander, speaking of the Ephesian presbyters as charged by the apostle, "comply, unless intrusted with the keys both of discipline and doctrine, with the power not of teaching merely, but of maintaining purity of doctrine by deciding controversies, trying heretics," &c. (p. 35.) "They were to act as shepherds, fulfil all a shepherd's duty—collecting, reclaiming, protecting, feeding—to do, in short, what our Saviour embodies in his full commission of the ministry, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs'—what the apostle Peter, who received that commission, delivered to the presbyters addressed by him, (1 Pet. v. 1-3;) and in both cases to do this, not as under-shepherds appointed by others who were over them and superior to them, but as commissioned, called, and qualified by the Holy Ghost. The terms, therefore, in which presbyters are spoken of in these standard passages for determining the *proper official* purport of the term—(which in its general meaning may, like its cognate term, bishop, have relation to œcumenical, civil, military, naval, judicial, or religious matters)\*—are a "metaphorical description, *in its whole extent*, of

\*See Wordsworth's Greek Testament, on Acts xx. 28.

the ministerial office as comprehending all that is essential to the continued existence of the church, and the attainment of the ends for which it was established." (*Alexander*, p. 33.)

The term *presbyter*, as thus expounded by inspired usage, is applied by both Paul and Peter, not to the presbyters of Ephesus alone, but to those at Miletus also, that is, to all included in that missionary field; and also to those in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and therefore to presbyters universally, everywhere.

The official meaning of the term *presbyter* is further determined by its application to themselves by the apostles. Peter calls himself a fellow-presbyter. John also styles himself a fellow-presbyter in the inscription of two epistles. The controversy at Antioch was referred to "the apostles and presbyters," (Acts xv. 2.) "It pleased the apostles and presbyters," (vs. 22.) "The apostles and presbyters and brethren," (vs. 23.) "The apostles and presbyters." (Acts xvi. 4.) "The apostles and presbyters with the whole church," (xv. 4.) Now observe the conclusiveness of this usage. The ministerial commission was first given to the twelve and seventy,\* and their ministerial duty is described by Christ as feeding his flock. Afterwards, when the ascended Saviour had given "pastors and teachers" to feed his flock, the term *presbyter*, which was endeared by immemorial use, as a term of dignity, reverence, and affection, was employed, and in connection with Christ's peculiar description of the office of his ministers—"feeding the flock of God"—and is appropriated by the apostles to themselves, and to all other ministers, as fellow-presbyters, and as those who feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. Add to this the universal appointment of presbyters in every church, even when no other officers are mentioned; their ordination by imposition of hands; their uniting in ordaining other ministers by imposition of hands; the reference to them as the only ministers, as when the apostle James directs any who are sick to send for the presbyters, and let them pray for them; and the very emphatic fact, that there is no other name besides *presbyter* (and the other terms used interchangeably with it,) for designating the fundamental and essential office of the ministry, nor any other delineation of its nature, functions, responsibilities, and authority.

The office of the presbyters was to watch over all the interests of the church, to instruct the ignorant, (1 Tim. iii. 2,) to exhort the faithful, to confute the gainsayers, (Titus, i. 9,) to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support

\*That their commission was the same as that of the twelve, see Luke x. 1, 10, 17; Matt. x. 17; and Mark vi. 7-14.



the weak, to be patient toward all, (1 Thess. v. 14,) to "feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood." They are to speak to us the word of God, and watch for souls. (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) They are *ἡγούμενοι*, leaders, guides, captains, such as have precedence. They are the *ἄγγελοι*, the angels, messengers, apostles, or missionaries of God. They are *διδασκαλοι*, doctors, or masters in doctrine. They are to "attend on teaching, to be instant in preaching, to labour, (*be occupied in it as their business*,) in the word and doctrine." They are shepherds, watchmen, messengers, and ambassadors of God. They are to be patterns to the flock; to lead and go before them, as a captain before his troops; as a shepherd before his flock; as a guide before the traveller; and as such they are to be followed. They are to give attendance to reading; to give themselves wholly to these things; to be instant in season and out of season; and to be supported so as to be able to give themselves to the word of God and to prayer, that their profiting may appear unto all. (1 Cor. ix. 7-14; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17.)

The conclusion therefore is, that the familiar and much-loved term, *presbyter*, has been selected under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, as one of the permanent and peculiar titles of the ministry of the gospel, and the one which is most expressive of dignity, veneration, and authority; and that it is not employed in its official sense, as this theory teaches, to designate a general order of office-bearers, of which ministers are *only a class*.

*The Presbyters in the Synod of Jerusalem—Acts, chap. xv.*

But it is urged against this conclusion, that there are several passages in which the term *presbyter* must be understood to include representatives of the people, as well as ministers. Of these, one of the most important is the use made of it in the account given in Acts, chap. xv., of the model Synod, held in the model church of Jerusalem, to determine certain questions of doctrine and order. "Certain men," "certain others also," besides Paul and Barnabas, were sent to consult with the apostles and presbyters, who "came together to consider of this matter." Now admitting all that Presbyterian writers have ever said on the conclusiveness of this proof of the Divine warrant of government by presbyteries and synods, the question arises, Who composed the body? Was it composed of apostles only, so far as a right to deliberate, and decide, and give judgment was concerned, as Romanists affirm; or of apostles, and presbyters, as Prelatists teach; or of apostles, presbyters, and members of the church at large, as Congregationalists affirm; or of apostles, presbyters, and representatives of the people, as Presbyterians maintain? This question depends very much on



the genuineness and meaning of the terms "certain men," "certain others also," "the brethren," by which the words "church" and "the whole church," are restricted; and by whose concurrent voice the matter was decided, and the decree promulgated.

Dr. Breckinridge and Dr. Killen both attach great importance to this Synod. The former however makes nothing of these terms, and the parties they represent. They are in the record, but they are not in his book. He ignores them altogether, and assumes that as *presbyters* included both teaching and ruling elders, these were merely "lookers on in Venice." Dr. Killen, however, found them lying across the track of this theory of the ruling and teaching presbyters; and designating, IN ADDITION to apostles, teaching presbyters, and ruling presbyters, "certain others also," called the BRETHREN. They must therefore be put out of the way, since in them there is an evident reference to "representatives of the people," who were different and distinct from the "presbyters." He calls, therefore, to his aid every one who can lend a hand towards clearing the track. Congregationalists take hold and at once identify "the brethren" with "the whole church," or "the whole assembly present." (See *Ancient Church*, p. 84.) But as this would not help the cause, Prelatists and Romanists are set to work; and it is decided that they only intimate that the decision "met the universal approval of the meeting;" or "they were gifted members;" or what settles the question, the true reading, as "now recognized by the highest critical authorities, and sustained by the whole narrative," is, "the apostles and presbyters—brethren," and therefore, "the apostles and elders, brethren were the only individuals officially concerned in this important transaction." (P. 85.)

Now what are we to understand by all this? Plainly this, that in order to coerce Presbyterians at least, to admit the appellative meaning of the term *presbyter*, as including teaching and ruling presbyters, in this narrative,—to secure, we say, this theory, Congregationalists, Prelatists, Romanists, and latitudinarian critics, are to be employed to nullify the clearest possible delineation of representatives of the churches, sitting, deliberating, and deciding, in this model ecclesiastical court. But the labor is all lost.

For, 1. The omission of "the brethren" in one verse does not expunge it from *ten* other passages in this chapter, nor the other expressions which are clearly expressive of special delegated office. 2. The reading in our authorized text is not abandoned, but maintained, by the best critics and the weightiest authorities. "The reading of some old manuscripts," says Baumgarten, and he is sustained by Dr. Alexander, and many more, "must, on closer examination, appear to be an inten-

tional alteration which had its source in the prejudice that in these discussions and decrees none but the apostles were concerned.\* 3. Romanists will lead to still further expurgation, and exclude, according to the reading attributed to Clement, both the words "Presbyters and Brethren."† 4. But let us adopt the reading of Dr. Killen, and it only follows that "presbyters" were co-equal and co-ordinate with apostles, and were therefore ministers and not "a mixed multitude" of different classes, and of whom some only ruled. 5. Dr. Killen, however, repudiates his own interpretation and reading. He calls these brethren "deputies commissioned to consult." "The conclusion," he says, "met the universal approval of the meeting, *including the deputies on both sides.*" "The apostles and elders, *with the whole church*, send *chosen* men of their own company." He alludes to the "certain *other deputies*," and to "*a distracted constituency appointing commissioners*," to "the deputies on both sides," including "Syrian deputies commissioned to consult." (Pp. 84, 85.) Dr. Killen, in reviewing this council from another stand-point, (p. 620) again declares, "A few years afterwards the *representatives of several Christian communities* assembled in the holy city and ordained decrees."

We have here, therefore, a very remarkable proof that the word "presbyter" in the New Testament was the official designation of ministers, and that other terms are employed to distinguish "the representatives of the people" as a separate order of officers. The term "the brethren" is certainly used in a special as well as in a general sense. It is embodied in the record of their decree, and in the introductory address of the decree itself, in marked separation from apostles and presbyters. It is found also in similar distinction from the people in many salutatory passages.‡ The *bishops* in Acts xx. 28, and presbyters in v. 17, are included under the title *brethren* in v. 32. An official representative sense must also be given to this term in Acts xviii. 23-27; Acts xvi. 2. Compare Acts xiv. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 14. That the term *brethren* is used as a title of distinction as well as a common Christian appellation, is maintained by many.§ It is also employed to denote a col-

\*Apost. Hist. vol. ii., p. 33. Alexander on Acts ii. 89. See also Griesbach, Bloomfield, Wordsworth, Tischendorf, Schaaf, Calvin, &c. It is sustained by Ebz., E. G., and H., and by the great body of the Cursive MSS., and by the Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic versions, and as Dr. Alexander says, "commonly."

†See Baumgarten, as above.

‡See 2 Cor. i. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 23; Phil. i. 20; 2 Cor. ii. 13 and viii. 18, 22, 23, and xii. 18, and ix. 35; Gal. i. 2; 1 Cor. i. 1; Phil. ii. 25, and i. 14; Eph. vi. 21; 1 Pet. v. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 15; Rev. xix. 10. Compare xxii. 9.

§Vorstius in Phil. Sacr. cap. iii. 166, determines the meaning, in some cases, to be dignissimus quem adeas. See also Suicer Thesaurus *in verbo*.

league in office.‡ Bloomfield concurs with Mosheim and Kuinœl in thinking that these brethren “were select persons from the laity, of most knowledge, influence, and credit, perhaps *delegated* from the whole body.” (*Crit. Digest*, Acts xv. 6.) Neander considers these brethren as representing all, and acting in their name. (*Hist.* vol. i., p. 205.) Bishop Hinds regards them as “other official persons met as the plenipotentiaries, each of his own body, who may be called the whole church, because appointed to represent it.” (*Hist. of Rise and Progress of Christ.*, pp. 145, 146.) This was also the opinion of Bishop Jewel, Whitaker, and other Episcopalians, and of Bishop White, who, on this ground, urged and secured the popular lay representation in the Episcopal Conventions in this country. Wordsworth (*Greek Test.* in loco,) says, we have in this Council the model of all succeeding ones, and for the presence “of the laity assisting at the deliberations, and giving force to the decree of the council.” (*Ib.* v. 2.) Many of our own writers take this view of the council, such as Professor Jamieson, Blondel, Bucer.\* In v. 22, these *brethren* are called *leading men*, that is, leaders, *governors*, or rulers, and in v. 7, &c., “*the whole church or multitude, because,*” as Dr. Wordsworth says, “the presence of all is continually assumed in cases where the assembly is open to and representative of all.”

*Pastors and Teachers. Eph. iv.—What?*

Let us then pass on to the consideration of another passage, in which these theorists endeavour to find support for the common application of the same names to ruling and teaching presbyters, by dividing the “pastors and teachers,” in Eph. iv. 8—11, so as to correspond with the ruling and teaching elders it seeks in 1 Tim. v. 17. These two words, however, have been given to Christ’s under shepherds ever since he had a flock to tend, or wandering sheep to be sought for amid the mountain wastes of sin and sorrow. But according to this theory, “pastor” means ruling elder, and “teacher”—what does it mean? According to this theory it only sometimes refers to the minister, but not less officially, as both Dr. Killen and Dr. Adger teach, to the ruling elder, whose function it is to teach, and to be apt to teach, and from house to house. The “pastors and teachers” given by the ascended Saviour have, however, been generally regarded as denoting the very form of metaphor under which Christ commissioned and designated his first ministers, who call themselves and their successors presbyters; under which Paul gave his final charge to the presbyters at Miletus; under which Peter charges these same and all

‡Robinson’s Greek Lexicon *in verbo*.

\*Jamieson’s Cyprianus Isotemus, 542, 13. Blondel in do. 542.



other presbyters; and under which Christ, the great exemplar of all his ministers, is represented as the shepherd, or *pastor*, and bishop or *teacher*. Ruling and preaching are also associated in all those passages in which, by almost universal consent, the ministry is spoken of—"Remember them that have *the rule* over you, who have *spoken* unto you the word of God," &c. (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) "Aptness to teach," as well as capacity to rule, is made an essential characteristic of a presbyter-bishop, (1 Tim. iii. 2;) and again in Tit. i. 9, where it is required of a bishop that he "hold fast the faithful words as he had been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers"—passages which, until this theory arose, no one had ever dreamed of applying to any but to presbyters and bishops, as ministers. "The Constitution and Discipline" of Dr. Killen's own church under section 4, treats of "bishops, presbyters, pastors, teachers, ministers, commonly called clergy," and after quoting as proof-texts all the above passages, including Eph. iv. 11, (*pastors* and *teachers*,) as referring to the ministerial office, with its two-fold functions of ruling and teaching, it concludes by saying, "Every regularly appointed teacher, pastor, or minister, was an apostolic presbyter, and every presbyter labouring in word and doctrine (*and it never applies the title of presbyter to any other*) was the apostolical bishop or overseer." (Pp. 5, 6.)

But even where these terms have been divided, they have been considered as representing different but not distinct officers—the one a preacher and pastor, and the other a doctor, professor, or systematic instructor. "None of these distinctions, however," says Dr. Eadie, "can be sustained scripturally and historically. We agree with those who hold that one office is described by the two terms." "The one office is honoured appropriately with two appellations. It comprised government and instruction." "Such pastors and guides rule as well as feed the flock, for keeping or tending is essential to the successful feeding." (*Commentary in loco*, p. 288, &c.) "The absence of the article before teachers proves," says Dr. Hodge, "that the apostle intended to designate the same persons as at once pastors and teachers." He quotes Augustine and Jerome, and adds: "In this interpretation, modern commentators, *almost without exception*, concur." (*Comment* on pp. 226, 227.) "These officers," says Schaff, "are undoubtedly the same with those elsewhere in the New Testament, commonly called presbyters, and fewer times bishops, whose business is expressly declared to be the feeding and oversight of the flock." (*Apost. Church*, p. 522.)

Neander, who originated this theory and interpretation of "pastors and teachers," admits that at the time of the Pastoral



Epistles, presbyters, on account of heresies and heretics, were required to be able to teach. "The gift of teaching, and the order of teachers are then spoken of as constituting an entirely distinct function and order." (*History of Church*, vol. i. p. 260.) The passage in Titus i. 9, he thinks, "certainly implies that the bishop must possess the gift of teaching," or "the ordinary and regular office of teaching." (Pp. 258, 267.) But when he assumes a *very late date* for these epistles, he relies upon "an extremely doubtful hypothesis of a second imprisonment of the author at Rome."\* "The conclusion, therefore, is that the presbyters or bishops of the apostolic period were the regular teachers and pastors, preachers, and leaders of the congregations;"† and it is very pleasant to find Dr. Killen concurring in our views when he interprets from another standpoint. Thus, on page 260, after showing that the churches of all Asia (see pp. 258, 259,) were included in Paul's farewell charge, (Acts xx.) and in Peter's solemn appeal, (1 Peter v. 1-5,) to the presbyters of so many provinces, Dr. Killen declares that the metaphorical illustration and "the designations are identical." The exhortation of Peter in verse 5, "*is obviously addressed to ministers*. This command can be acted upon *only by ministers* who are confederates, and hold the same ecclesiastical status." He would therefore on this occasion render the words thus: "Likewise ye younger (presbyters) submit yourselves unto the elder, and ALL TO ONE ANOTHER." "I have," he adds, "supposed *presbyters* (his own italics) to be understood as the apostle is speaking to *them* in all the preceding part of the chapter."‡

Vitringa discusses at length the meaning of the terms pastor and teacher. "One thing," he says, "is certain, and *admitted by all*, that Paul by pastors designates the ordinary presidents (*Praefectos*) of the church, those I say, which are otherwise called presbyters and bishops." This he illustrates by the synonymous use of these titles, and by Ignatius, and by a multitude of passages from the Jewish writings, and among them from Philo and the Zohar, to prove that every part of the office of the doctor of the synagogue is attributed to pastors; whence we conclude that pastors (פֶּרְנָסִים *Parnasim*) formerly signified learned and pious men, who were devoted to the work of making prayers and exhortations to the people, and expounding the Holy Scriptures. They were not, therefore, as Lightfoot supposed, the deacons, but "those rulers of the synagogue who were at the same time doctors, eminent for learning and piety."§

\*Schaff, *Apost. Church*, pp. 531, 328-347.

†Ibid.

‡Ancient Church, page 260. The reconciliation of this with pp. 232 and 258, we cannot of course be responsible for.

§De Syn. Vet. Lib. iii. part I. chap. ii. pp. 621, 627, et passim.

In Vitringa's day, the term pastor was admitted to mean docere, monere, sacramenta administrare, et omni potestate a Christo ministris suis concessa, gregem gubernare. Vitringa could therefore triumphantly ask "whether any one could *seriously* dare to assert and defend the application of these titles of pastor and bishop to lay presbyters, (Presbyteris laicis.)" Since his day confidence has considerably increased, but perhaps, if the authority for it is traced up, it may terminate in an elephant resting upon nothing.

*The argument from the plurality of Presbyters.*

We are thus led to notice another, and indeed the most relied upon of all the grounds on which this theory is based. This is the admitted fact, that in general a plurality of presbyters is spoken of as existing in one and the same place, and sometimes even in one and the same church. On this subject we have already said enough to undermine its apparent strength by calling to mind the missionary character of the apostolic and primitive churches, and the relation of these many presbyters to the whole field of their united labours. Like all the other premises from which this theory draws its conclusions, this argument is at once prelatie and congregational, and is employed by both parties for the overthrow of Presbyterians. As employed by prelatists, it may be found discussed and most ably refuted by Clarkson, in his very learned works on Diocesan Churches and Primitive Episcopacy, and by others.

Mr. Guthrie, whose recent work on the eldership we noticed as an intended manual for the Independent Morrisonian churches, carries out *the admitted premises of all these theorists* in this manner. It is granted that when the New Testament speaks of a plurality of presbyters and bishops in every particular church, they allude to the two classes of the one order of rulers, called indiscriminately presbyters, since we could not imagine a plurality of preachers in any one infant church. All arguments, therefore, founded upon such a plurality of preachers for a presbytery, are baseless, and "a territorial church or a national church is a purely human institution—a hissing shibboleth sounds in their very names." (P. 2.) On page 15, Mr. Guthrie boldly avers that the largest cities mentioned in the New Testament—and he names "such large metropolitan centres as Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome—had but one church." "The principle that harmonizes and explains the whole is, that while all elders in the apostolic churches were rulers, only some were teachers." (P. 80, &c.) Now this is precisely the argument of every one of the writers we have examined. Mr. McKerrow, for instance, occupies a

whole chapter in proving that the order of "presbyters" existed in the apostolic churches, and then, in another chapter, offers two proofs that these presbyters were of two kinds—ruling and teaching: first, their plurality; and second, 1 Tim. v. 17. But the first we perceive leads to Congregationalism, and the second is an assumption which is disproved by the established usage of the New Testament, and, as we will show, by inherent critical difficulties. Both Vitranga and Selden make it evident that there were many synagogues in one place, and also a plurality of presbyters in one synagogue, varying in number with circumstances.\* The whole analogy of the synagogue usage, and the missionary character of the apostolic churches, concur in rendering the uniform ancient Presbyterian interpretation the only true and satisfactory one. This is well expressed by Thorndike, who says there were anciently "presbyters in every church," and "presbyters in every city;" "not meaning one in a place, but presbyteries, that is, colleges, bodies, companies of presbyters, with common advice to order the *churches* planted in those cities." The character of these churches must, from the nature of things, have been the same as every such church in heathen lands now. In Shanghai, for instance, there are "six missionary churches, and many smaller preaching-places afford facilities for inquirers. This is felt to be the case by the younger missionaries, in such a degree that most of them are anxious to go out into 'the regions beyond,' leaving to those who first broke ground here the task of training up, and building up in the faith, those who in the course of Providence are attaching themselves to the army of the Lord, and are requiring to be more perfectly instructed in the way of life."

In exact accordance with what is thus taking place in heathen lands—and such as constituted the field of apostolic and primitive Christianity—we find everywhere the presbyters acting as a combined, organized body; we find household churches (*ἐκκλησiai κατ' οἶκον*) frequently mentioned and greeted;‡ and we have found the apostolical epistles addressed, not to any one of these, but to the whole body of Christians in and around Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c., as all together forming *one body or church*.†

The conclusion, that because there were generally a plurality of presbyters in every apostolical mission church, therefore the majority of them were not preachers, and must have been ruling elders, is a triple *non sequitur*, 1. in assuming any other meaning for *presbyter* than minister; 2. in confining all to one

\*Vitranga, Lib. III., chap. xviii., p. 874.

‡Rom. xvi. 4, 5, 14, 15; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2.

†1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 2, v. 1 sq.; 2 Cor. i. 1, 23, ii. 1 sq.; Col. iv. 16. This Neander, in both his works, recognizes, and Bauer. See Schaff, 526, 527.

congregation and locality; 3. in arguing from a *forming* to a *fixed* condition of the church. No such officers as ruling elders were then known under the title of presbyters. Many congregations were united under the care of one mission church, and economy, comfort, and efficiency would not only justify but require the association of several ministers together. A plurality of presbyters in one mission church no more proves that this term referred to ruling elders as well as ministers, than the same fact does at Shanghai, Ceylon, and elsewhere. Nay, Dr. Owen himself teaches, that there may be many ministers as well as *one*, even in a single congregation, and the Presbyterian Standards of the Reformers, of Geneva, of Westminster, and of the Scottish, and all affiliated churches to this day, provide for such a plurality. This theory is, therefore, built on the sand—upon baseless assumptions—upon a loose interpretation of an equivocal term—upon an inconclusive argument, which understands the term *presbyter* in one sense in its premises, and another in its conclusion.

*The Presbyter of the Fathers and Reformers.*

The conclusion, therefore, remains, that in the usage of the New Testament the term presbyter—and its collateral terms bishop, pastor, &c.—mean the same office that they do now, and refer exclusively, in a strict official sense, to the order of ministers. This is true also of the apostolical and primitive Fathers, and, as we have seen, of the Reformers, and of all Presbyterian Standards. The assertion that because among the mission churches of the early Fathers, and the growing corporations of later and corrupt churches, a plurality of presbyters is spoken of, therefore they must have been in greater part ruling elders, is simply preposterous. The language of these Fathers, and the condition of their churches, are precisely analogous to those of the New Testament writers and churches. Presbyters and bishops are their ministers, and are one and the same order, until by degrees (*paulatim*, as Jerome says,) the bishop was regarded as a higher, and the presbyter a second or lower order, and deacons a third order of MINISTERS. This fact of the original identity—as the one and only order of ministers—of presbyters and bishops, is the corner-stone of the historical argument for the scriptural, apostolical, and primitive polity of Presbyterianism. Render the term presbyter equivocal and appellative, and the argument falls to the ground. But if there is anything historically true, it is that the terms presbyter and bishop have come down to us as the invariable and untransferable titles of the ministry.

According to Augusti and other archæologists, the term presbyter was usually retained in ecclesiastical writings, or if



translated into Latin it was rendered by *sacerdos*, pastor, and the like.”\* The Saxons used the word *preostre*, and afterwards, by contraction, *prester*. The High and Low Dutch have it in the word *priester*. The French say *prestre*; the Italians, *prete*, and the Spaniard, *presbytero*. The translation of the word into English occasioned much controversy. In the English translation of 1562 the word priest was employed to translate presbyter.† Hooker justifies this rendering as being liable to no mistake, but as it had been so long perverted he was willing to drop it.‡ Beza and Erasmus retained the word presbyter. Our translators, being all prelatists, and acting for King James, after he had become such, found it necessary to conceal much of the argument in favour of presbytery by adopting the ambiguous word *elder*. But having been introduced, it has come to be used by Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, &c. for their ministers as distinguished from the laity or brethren, and from officers called deacons, stewards, &c. “*There is, therefore, no dispute,*” says Riddle, “*that the term presbyter continued to denote those ministers to whom the New Testament gives indifferently the title of presbyter or bishop.*”§ Suicer, in his *Thesaurus of the Fathers*, sustains this statement, and though in favour of the distinction of ruling and teaching elders, gives no attempted example of it earlier than Bullinger and Illyricus among the Reformers.\*\* Bentley, therefore, to sustain prelacy, invented the theory that in the next generation after the apostles all Christendom agreed to use the term *bishops* for prelates as successors of the apostles, and leave presbyters to denote ordinary ministers under them.†† But the identity of presbyters and bishops was openly acknowledged in remarkable testimonies by the most learned of the Fathers—Tertullian, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theodoret, &c.—even after the Roman prelatial system had become completely established. §§ This is the standing and irrefragable argument of Presbyterians against Prelacy. It was the sledgehammer of the Reformers, and is the substance of Dr. Killen’s able work, and of his skilful application of the late discovered statue of Hippolytus and his *Philosophumena*, and of the Catacombs of Rome, and of the insoluble riddle of the early prelatial succession of Rome and elsewhere.‡‡ “The pastor,

\*Riddle’s *Antiquities of the Christian Church* based on Augusti, &c., p. 232.

†See Fulke’s *Defence of the English Translation*, 1583, p. 250. Parker Society ed.

‡*Ecclesiastical Polity*.

§Riddle, *ibid*, p. 57.

\*\*Tom. I., *Πρεσβυτερος*.

††See in Wordsworth’s *Greek Testament*, on Acts xx. 28.

§§See Gieseler, Rothe, l. c., 207-217. Schaff, p. 524, &c.

‡‡*Ancient Church*, pp. 344, 348, 350, &c., and 331 *et passim*.

(presbyter) and not the prelate," says Calderwood, one of the earliest Scottish champions of presbytery, "is the minister whom the apostles did approve. Such were Linus, Clemens, Cletus, Anacletus, fellow-presbyters at Rome at *one time*."

It is perfectly preposterous to question a position now universally admitted by Prelatists themselves. Dr. Barr and Rothe agree therefore in the opinion that "both the presbyter and bishop were originally the same in their sphere with the later bishops;"† and a most valuable part of Dr. Killen's work—and it enters into every Presbyterian argument§—is his elucidation of the process by which the moderator, or as he calls him in one place, "the chief *pastor*!" "became permanent, and was called by eminence the bishop."\*\* Gieseler and Gue-ricke elaborate the same argument.††

It is of some weight to mention that such critically accurate and candid writers as Archbishop Whately and Bishop Hinds use the term *elder* interchangeably with minister, and give authority for the exclusive application of the original word presbyter to ministers.‡‡

We have prepared an analysis of the evidence presented from the Fathers to prove that by presbyters they must have understood ministers and not ruling elders, which, however, we must omit. Separate from such quotations, the proofs founded upon plurality of presbyters, and upon the existence of *other persons* called *seniores plebis*, *seniors of the people*—(not ruling elders nor *presbyters*, but *seniores*)\*—and there is not a particle of proof that the PRESBYTERS of the Fathers were, in any case, any other than ministers authorized to preach and administer ordinances. "*Nothing*," says Vitringa, "*is more certain, nothing in all ancient history is more determined*," than that presbyters "were part of the clergy, like the bishops, or, if you please, like the ministers of the word of our time, having power to administer sacraments, baptize, anoint, preside at the Lord's Supper, distribute the elements, bless the people," &c., "and that in the oriental churches presbyters were preachers equally with bishops, is a fact beyond dispute."† By an examination of evidence analogous to that of the statue of Hippolytus, Rothe has concluded that the *seniores plebis* were

†See Olshausen on Timothy, Introd., p. 174. Edinb. ed.

§See, for instance, Hill's Lectures, vol. ii., on Episcopal and Presbyterian Controversy.

\*\*See pp. 556, 578, 579, 580, 584, 585, 619, &c.

††Gieseler, vol. i. p. 108, 109.

‡‡Whately's Lessons on the Worship of God, Lesson v. § 11, 12, &c. Hinds' History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity, last ed. 1 vol. pp. 231, 232, 233, who quotes several early Fathers.

\*That these *seniores* were not church officers at all is the opinion of Vitringa. See Vitringa at length at p. 511, &c. He is of opinion that a reference to them does the cause of ruling elders more harm than good.

†See page 489, 511.

civil magistrates. At any rate they were laymen, (plebis) representatives of the people, not even called presbyters, but enumerated after, and in addition to them, and were confined to the North African churches.‡

1 Timothy v. 17, *examined.*

We have now examined every ground upon which this theory attempts to establish the claim of ruling elders to be the presbyters of Scripture except one. We have seen that in the New Testament the term presbyter refers to ministers of the word "able to teach others also," and to commit their office, by ordination, to faithful men in perpetuated succession.

We are now, therefore, prepared to take up the consideration of the only passage in which apparent authority has ever been found for the theory which makes presbyters one order of rulers with two classes, that is, 1 Tim. v. 17. As translated by Alfred, the words are, "Let the presbyters, (*πρεσβυτεροι*), who have well-presided, (over their portion of the church's work) be held worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and teaching."

There is, it will be evident, nothing here to *suggest* any other distinction than that of work or occupation among officers holding the same offices, and members of the same order. Prelacy and Popery have eagerly sought to establish a distinction of order (or class,) in order to create a divine right for an order of rulers who, while authorized to preach, are chiefly commissioned to exercise the power of jurisdiction. *A distinction* in this passage makes, therefore, for Prelacy and Popery, and hence many authorities from among Prelatists can be quoted for the distinction. By an equivocal, indeterminate meaning of the word presbyter, they hope to destroy our argument for the one order of co-equal ministers. But even if such a meaning and such a distinction are admitted, what is gained for the theory that makes *ruling* the one fundamental order and *preaching* a class under it? Nothing but contradiction in the very words of the passage itself. For they plainly reverse that order and subordinate ruling to teaching. And so do Calvin and the other Fathers of the Presbyterian church. Let us hear old Ayton,\* and to understand fully his language, let it be borne in mind that when lay elders or governors were agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly, the Independents and Erastians in Parliament succeeded in destroying the whole system by securing the right of appeal from ecclesiastical to civil courts, and the presence of four elders in each ecclesiastical court to one minister.† Ayton, like other defenders of

‡Ibid.

\*Primitive Constitution of the Church, &c.

†See Reid's Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vol. 2, pp. 33, 34.

Presbyterianism of that period, urges "that as licensing probationers, ordination of ministers, suspension, deposition, excommunication, and the like . . . nearly and particularly concern the ministerial office," "it is reasonable that in concluding any acts of jurisdiction or government in the church, it ought to be by plurality of ministers. The pastoral office is a SUPERIOR ORDER to that of mere ruling elders."

This passage, therefore, on any interpretation, can never be sufficient to authorize the theory which makes ruling elders and not ministers the one fundamental order, neither does it warrant any other meaning of "presbyter" than what we have found to be the *uses loquendi* of the New Testament, and of the Presbyterian and all other churches, in all ages. Presbyter in this passage means just what we have seen it means in every other passage—the minister to whom rule *and* authority, presidency over the churches, *and* labouring in word and doctrine, were assigned as his peculiar functions. Presumptively this is and must be its meaning, unless it can be proved that it is not. We are not called upon to prove that it is, nor to give any satisfactory and unobjectionable interpretation. This must be given by those putting on the word presbyter here a meaning not found elsewhere, and by no means necessary here. There are a number of explanations which have been given of the passage, as having exclusive reference to the ministerial office, while no adequate reason can justify the foundation upon it of two indivisible, indeterminate, unequal, and fundamentally distinct classes of presbyters—one to rule ONLY and one to do what? To labour in word and doctrine *only*? This would be the *contrast*, and the necessary contrast, *if there is, as is alleged, a division into two classes*. But this is not the theory which the words are made to sustain, nay, to originate and authenticate. That theory makes the two classes to be, one that rules well, or ruling elders, and one that does this, *and while doing this* labours in word and doctrine. The text repudiates any such division. It implies no division, but affirms that while all presbyters that act well their parts as rulers in the church are worthy of double honour, they are especially so if they labour hard and faithfully in what is their chief end and business, under the commission of Christ—in the preaching of the gospel—labouring in word and doctrine. There is here no distinction in order or class, but only in the department in which efficient labour is most to be commended, and to discharge which the ministry is to be supported, and ministers enabled to give their whole time, and study, and labour, to pastoral duty.

The Provincial Synod of London say: "They (ministers) are called *such as rule well*; not in any civil way, as state officers, but *such as labour (rule well) in word and doctrine*."



This is, after all, the force of the passage. Double honour—that is ample support—and being esteemed highly in love for their works' sake, are *not to be given*, except where the well-ruling of the presbyter (who is officially both ruler and teacher) is shown in his labours in the word and doctrine. Preaching and teaching—teaching while preaching—earnestly and zealously applying the word and doctrine to the flock publicly, and from house to house—this is the “rule well” that is to be honoured and supported. In other words, ruling is in order to preaching, and not preaching in order to ruling. Authority and rule—the keys—are given to impart efficiency to preaching, and to render it the power of God unto salvation—the intermediate causative agency between the two final ends of the church of God, “the perfecting of the saints,” and “the edifying (or completing) the body of Christ.” Mean what it may, therefore, this text must mean the exaltation of “the ministry of reconciliation,” and not ruling; and mean what it will, it *cannot* mean what this theory of a two-fold presbyterate teaches, and requires it to declare; since, if it does divide it, it will be into those that rule *only*, and those that labour in doctrine *only*. There is no alternative. If they who are required to labour well in word and doctrine, are also required to “rule well,” then are they one and the same, in office, in authority, in qualification, in function, and in rights, however differing in personal gifts or in official devotedness. If, on the other hand, the “rule well” and the “labour in word and doctrine” are distinct, then they are distinguished here as those that only “rule well,” and those who *do not rule*, but labour only in word and doctrine. But that helps this theory as little as the Presbyterian view, and is contrary to what is elsewhere established as true of presbyters, and to the whole context, which refers only to one order of presbyters, and that—as Calvin and all other interpreters admit—the order of the ministry.

The emphasis in this passage, according to the Greek language, is: 1. On the word *presbyters*, which is the subject of the proposition. 2. On *προεστώτες καλως*, who *do well* what is implied in acting as a *proestos*, that is, one who presides. 3. On *κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ*,\* &c.; they who “labour in word and doctrine.” “The meaning of the term *presbyters*, we have established to be *ministers*. By *προεστώς* is literally expressed one set over, at the head of, as the president or the mayor of a city.” (*Plato and Polyb.*, in Liddell and Scott.) By “*who labour*,” is literally expressed, who are beaten out, wearied, and faint with their zealous ministerial labours.† What is predicated of presbyters, therefore, is, that they preside and mode-

\*See Taylor's Emphatic New Testament. London. 1854.

†See Emphatic New Testament, by Taylor, *in loco*. Bagster. London.

rate in all church assemblings, and are engaged in imparting instruction. And what is declared of presbyters who preside and administer *well*, and *labour zealously* in preaching and teaching, is, that they deserve double honour. In this verse, the term *presbyter* is therefore determined to mean that officer who is both a *labourer* in word and doctrine, and a *proestos*—a leader, president, administrator of ordinances, steward of mysteries, and ruler, having the keys of the kingdom.

A clear exposition of the indubitable official use of the term *προεστώτες* translated “*rule*,” will of itself determine the untenableness of the theory that applies it to ruling elders, and not to ministers. The term has been already shown to be a correlative term with *presbyter*, expressive of the same persons and offices. The *proestos* in 1 Thess. v. 12, had pastoral care of souls, closely laboured among them, and admonished them as an ensample to the flock of which he was the shepherd. Justin Martyr uses the word *proestos* six times for the minister who presided in public worship, preached, prayed, gave thanks, and blessed the people. Irenæus speaks of “presbyters who are elated with pride at their exaltation to the *chief seats*,” Firmilian speaks of “the church where presbyters *presided*, in whom is vested the power of baptizing and imposition of hands.” Hilary says, “A presbyter is he who is distinguished with the *first seat*.” Ambrose says, “by the angels of the Apocalypse, we are to understand the *rectors* or *proestotes*.” Epiphanius says, “Aerius, having become a . . . . presbyter in Alexandria, *presided over* a church (*προϊστατο*) called Baucolis.” Tertullian calls the presbyter the “*summus sacerdos qui est episcopus*.” (See Killen, pp. 531, 563.) Hermas speaks of “the bishops, that is, the *presidents* of the churches.” (Ibid.) Dr. Killen calls Polycarp “the apostolic presbyter,” “the presiding minister of the church.” (Pp. 557, 558.) “We have shown,” (says Dr. Killen, p. 560,) “that in various cities . . . . the senior presbyter continued to be *president* (*proestos*) until about the close of the second century.” The name of presiding presbyter (*προεστώς πρεσβυτερος*) continued, he says, “to be given to the Roman bishop until at least the close of the second century.” (Pp. 332, 333.) But we must stop, for we might fill pages of proof from Dr. Killen alone.\* The term *proestos* limits and restrains the *possibly indefinite* meaning of *presbyter* to its strict official and ministerial one, and renders any other interpretation impossible.

But the emphatic and qualifying term, *καλως*, translated *well*, increases the impropriety of such a reference, since it declares that the distinction affirmed is not in office, nor even

\*See pp. 506, 516-518, 576, 580, 584, 560, 564, 575, 576, 578, 619, 508.

in function, but in their perfect or imperfect discharge. Judicious presiding required no ordinary ability and wisdom. In all assemblies, the regularity or irregularity of their proceedings depends much on the wisdom and prudence with which they are conducted; and in the infant state of the church, when confusion and disorder did prevail, and made specific instruction necessary, and when enemies were ever ready to take advantage of anything which could be converted into calumnious charges, the security, as well as prosperity of the churches depended essentially upon the judicious, as well as winning manner of their presiding ministers.† But, while all this is true, yet the earnest and edifying presentation of the truth as it is in Jesus, well and laboriously prepared, and affectionately conveyed from house to house, as well as from the pulpit—this was the throne and sceptre of the ministry, the shepherd's crook, by which souls were won and watched for Christ, and therefore the apostle adds the word "*especially*," (μαλιστα) to carry on the emphasis of the word "*well*," (καλως,) and thus by one of the most general and commonly used terms expresses this thought—that is to say, if they also "*labour in*," or diligently and faithfully hold forth the word of life. The term μαλιστα does not divide things that are essentially different, but only marks a difference between things essentially alike. It is the remotest possible from scientific classifying phraseology.

It points here to some specified peculiarity of a portion of the same class by which they are distinguished from the rest, and not—as *this theory requires*—to two distinct classes. Neither does this theory allow "*labouring in word and doctrine*" to be peculiar to either class, but makes it common to both; and, undoubtedly, there is nothing in these words to imply public authoritative preaching any more than in others which this theory applies to ruling elders, such as "*apt to teach*," which is made a necessary qualification for ALL elders in this same epistle, in conjunction with "*ruling well*"—both being required as proofs of any person being qualified for the difficult task of governing the church of God.\* All that is here described is therefore of one class, and of every one of that class—which must be the ministry.

But the class referred to is further determined to be the ministry, by the words "*double honour*," (τιμης,) to which the word *especially*, and the subsequent word *labour*, are relative, and of which they give the reason. "Let the presbyters that rule or govern their flocks well be counted worthy of double honour, especially (μαλιστα,) that is, if they also,"

† See Bloomfield and Benson in do. Crit. Digest in loco.

\* See Litton on Church of God, p. 391.

says Benson—"and that chiefly and because or in respect of their labour in word and doctrine," says Mede.† That this word refers to an ample and honourable support, is made very nearly certain by the connection. "From the consideration of the relief of the poor the apostle proceeds to the support of the clergy," says Bloomfield; and in confirmation he proceeds to give proof in v. 18. "To be thought worthy" means "the obtaining that of which one is thought worthy." Theophylact and Chrysostom interpret it "a liberal stipend." "And in this," says Bloomfield, "most of the recent commentators are agreed."‡ "The use of the term *τιμη* for stipend," he adds, "may well be considered among the delicacies of Greek phraseology and of the apostle." "From the general tenor of examples, as well as from the context, *it is evident*," says Alford, "that not merely honour, but recompense, is here in question." Grotius refers the allusion to the double portion of the first born. The passage is given by the later Helvetic Confession as proof of the "stipend due to ministers—all things that be necessary for themselves and families." Calvin does not oppose Chrysostom's interpretation, and adds afterwards, "Paul enjoins that support shall be provided chiefly for pastors who are employed in teaching." In his Institutes, also, Calvin says, "The apostle here refers not only to the reverence due to them, (i. e. pastors,) but to the recompense to which their services are entitled."\*

Doddridge interprets the words an "honourable maintenance, according to what they need, given in a liberal and respectful manner." Adam Clarke says, "Almost *every critic* allows that *τιμη* here means reward, stipend."§ Wordsworth (*Greek Testament*) interprets by "double pay," and refers to Mede, Barrow, and others. On the analogous passage in 1 Thess. v. 13, "esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake," Bloomfield remarks, "which of course includes providing for their honourable maintenance." (*Critical Digest*.) And Koppe on this text remarks that the words "plainly signify, provide him with sustenance."

But let us turn to the other term here employed, which combines to fix its meaning, and that is "*labour* (*κοπιωντες*) in word and doctrine." "This is a very general term," says Bloomfield, (*Crit. Dig. on 1 Thess. v. 12*) "to denote labouring for the promulgation of the gospel;" and Mosheim thinks that this kind of ministerial labour is made prominent, because

†Mede's Works, vol. i., book i., disc. 19, p. 92. See also Litton on the Church, pp. 391, 392.

‡Critical Digest. He refers to Wolf's Sch'l Lex., Heinrichs, Whitby, and "many eminent moderns."

\*Book ii., chap. viii. § 35.

§He dwells upon the thought, and again fully on verse 18.



especially necessary at that time.‡ The word evidently implies that the ministry is their *labour*—their daily, regular, and exclusive occupation, so much so, that in order to give themselves wholly to it they must be supported.

We thus perceive that by the established use of the term presbyter; by the general tenor of the passage; by the context; by the force of its several terms; this passage must be interpreted as applying only to ministers, and that the *invariable* application of it to such by ancient interpreters, and by the very general consent of modern commentators, renders this interpretation certain, and most assuredly overthrows the theory which BUILDS upon IT a twofold order of ruling and teaching presbyters.\*\*

Finally, on this passage let it be noted, that the Westminster Assembly, which perfected the Form of Government which is constitutionally that of all Presbyterian churches except our own and the Continental, rejected this text as a proof text for ruling elders, but employed it to prove that the minister had a ruling power in the church as minister, and that while there *ought* to be in every church one both to rule and labour in word and doctrine, “the precedence is due to ministers.”†

### 1 *Thessalonians* v. 12.

This conclusion, however, will be still further strengthened by referring to the very analogous passage in 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their works’ sake.” In making this the text for his discourse before a convention of ruling elders on the nature of their office,§ Dr. Thornwell said, “Commentators are universally agreed, that the rulers of the church are the persons to whom the apostle here refers.” Now, this is true. But the rulers to whom these commentators refer it are ministers, and ministers only. We have been able to find no diversity among all within our reach, except one, who is of no permanent authority, referred to by Poole in his Synopsis. Their unanimity is wonderful and decisive. Dr. Thornwell’s statement is equivocal. The middle term (*ruler*) in the syllogism—necessary to include ruling elders within the affirmation—must be employed in different senses in the two premises.

‡Comment on the Affairs of Christians, vol. i. See Rom. xvi. 6, 12; 1 Cor. xii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 10; xvi. 16; Gal. iv. 11; Phil. ii. 16; Col. i. 29; 1 Tim. iv. 10; v. 17. See also Limborch Theol. lib., viii. vii., cap. iv., § 10.

\*\*Poole in his Crit. Sacra, scarcely alludes to such an interpretation, and in his Annotations, after enumerating several interpretations (not including this) declines giving an opinion.

†See in Gillespie’s Notes in his Works, vol. ii. pp. 4, 20, 58, 64.

§Held in Charleston in January, 1860. See Report of, in the Courier.

This text does refer to rulers, and ruling elders are rulers. But it does not follow that it refers to ruling elders, since ministers are rulers in a very different sense from ruling elders. *They are rulers of ruling elders*, and before, and independently of them by the very nature of their office, call, qualifications, and authority given to them *directly* by Christ, through the Holy Ghost and his word, and *mediately* by his appointed church court. They are brought into relation to the *people* only when licensed or ordained by that court to preach; and to any particular church, only when called to become, by mutual covenant, their pastor. "Ruling elders," however, "are *properly the representatives of the people, and chosen by them* for the purpose of exercising *government and discipline* in CONJUNCTION WITH pastors or ministers." Now, it is exclusively to pastors or ministers commentators universally refer this passage, and since it is closely analogous to 1 Tim. v. 17, the whole weight of their authority is in favour of the same interpretation of that passage. Calvin has a comment on this passage of nearly three octavo pages, and refers it exclusively to "pious teachers," "good ministers," "ministers who faithfully *preside*," "pastors," "teachers," "true pastors, that *by teaching govern* properly and faithfully," *fidèles ministres de la parole*, "whom the Spirit of God honours with the distinction of *presidency*." This *presidency* denotes "spiritual government . . . in the name and by the commandment of Christ . . . *presiding in the Lord*. Unquestionably that any one may be ranked among lawful pastors, it is necessary he should show he *PRESIDES IN THE LORD* . . . and what else is this but that by pure doctrine he puts Christ in his own seat," &c.

Dr. Owen, who is only second as authority to Calvin, with these theorists, on Heb. iii. 3-6, where ministers are declared by him to be partakers of the honour and glory of Christ as the great builder of the church, and therefore to be highly esteemed, quotes in proof this passage. (*Exposition*, vol. vii. p. 563.)

We need not do more than refer to all the authorities in *Poole's Synopsis*, and to the full and argumentative exposition in his *Annotations*, to Matthew Henry, to Scott, as edited, with additional comments, by Dr. Symington, (Glasgow, 1858, vol. iii. 4to;) to the very full and able note of Guyse; to Burkitt and Clarke; to Gill, in a very extended note; to Doddridge, Barnes, and others. Alfred refers the passage to presbyters or ministers as the rulers of the church, and all the terms to the same office.

Chrysostom and Theophylact, are explicit in giving the same application of the words. "If," says the latter, "you honour those who *preside* over you in temporal affairs, how much more

should you respect those who do it in spiritual things—who regenerate you in baptism, pray for you," &c. See in Valpy, who expresses his views through them. (*Greek Testament*, with Notes.)

Grotius and Benson both refer the passage to "religious teachers," to whom respect, honour, and comfortable maintenance are due.\* Wordsworth attaches importance to this passage, as proving, in this earliest period and church, the organization and regular support of the Christian ministry since "we have here a body of men labouring and *presiding*, and admonishing the rest—in a word, a body of clergymen, settled and established." (*Greek Testament*, with Notes.) So also speaks Bloomfield. (*Synops. Critic.*) "Ministers," adds Doddridge "*by virtue of their office*, may be said to preside over Christian assemblies." "This," says Litton, (*on the Church* p. 134,) "is an ultimate and essential idea in the office of a minister or preacher, and hence even the apostles and seventy were a body of persons authorized by Christ to *preside over* and conduct the affairs of his kingdom."

Some, however, besides these theorists, have found a diversity of rulers, here spoken of, but of what kind? Ruling elders? No! Some, like Mosheim, say *if* the order of presbyters is to be divided, there are *three* kinds of *teachers* spoken of; and Bloomfield, Reeves, Barrow, and others, find here a chief bishop, or prelate ruling over his two inferior orders of clergy, so that while these were *pastores gregis* (*pastors of the flock*) he was *pastor pastorum et gregis*, (pastor of both pastors and flock,) as Charles I. was fond of saying. In every way, therefore, this passage is limited to ministers, who are, as all writers admit, (*πρωεστωτες*) *presiding rulers*, and hence this passage strengthens the similarly striking general concurrence in the interpretation of 1 Tim. v. 17.

#### *Our Historical Name.*

There is one other assumption in this theory, of which we desired to present a full historical refutation. It is, as stated by Dr. Adger, that "the distinction between bishops or elders who teach and rule, and bishops or elders who rule *only* . . . gives us our name of the Presbyterian church—the church that holds to government by elders, *the essence* of whose office is *ruling and not teaching*." (See *South. Presbyterian Review*, p. 167, 1859.)

Now this is contrary to fact, since elders are found in the Methodist, Lutheran, and—historically and constitutionally—in Congregational, Baptist, Independent, and, as Owen declares, in some form and name *in every church in the world*.

\**Εἰδέναι* has this meaning in Gen. xxxix. 6.



This is also contrary to history. The name of Presbytery was given to our system by Beza, perhaps a century before the name of "ruling elders" was commonly given to these representatives of the people; before the distinction referred to was definitively made; while as yet the church had not either the wish nor the power to make the office a purely spiritual or permanent one; while the office was denominated by various names in different churches and countries; before the office was uniformly or universally adopted, or made obligatory; and, finally, before even the courts of the churches were generally called presbyteries. These positions might all be fully sustained.

Presbytery, in its generic and historical meaning, is that system of polity of which the highest, the fundamental, and the absolutely essential officer is the *presbyter*, as opposed to prelate on the one hand, and to the people on the other. It is the presbyter who gives coherence, resistance, and attraction to the whole body, combining in one organization the laity and the clergy; repelling the arrogance of prelatic despotism; and attracting and attaching to it, the body of the people, by associating with it in co-equal government their chosen representatives, both for disciplinary and distributive rule—for the management both of its spiritual and temporal affairs.

The presbyter as opposed by, and opposed to, the prelate, and then again to the *plebs* or mass of the people, was to the Reformers the first point of assault and repulse, around which the battle of liberty was fought; the scriptural and impregnable fortress into which they ran, and the armoury from which they drew the sword of the Spirit to pierce even to the dividing asunder all the unscriptural despotism and dogmas of prelates, and to secure for the Lord's people his own priesthood, commissioned and sanctified by one Spirit, their long alienated birthright and inheritance in Israel. Let any one read the history of the Reformation at Zurich, at Geneva, at Wittemberg, at Edinburgh, everywhere; and he will see that the presbyter, as God's divinely instituted minister in opposition to unauthorized prelates, and to uncalled, unsent, visionary, or fanatical lay preachers, was the head and front of all their contentings, the fore-front of the hottest battle. Read the Scottish Confession, the Books of Discipline, the Book of Common Order, the Confessions of every Church, the Solemn League and Covenant, the Acts of the Scottish Assembly for the first fifty, yea, hundred years; let him read the "Pastor and Prelate" of Calderwood and other early apologetical vindications, and he will have no doubt that we wear the honoured name of Presbyterian in testimony to this cardinal office of presbyter with its all-embracing authority and relations.



Horror of Popery everywhere led to an almost equal horror of Prelacy; and in England, Scotland, and Ireland led to the Solemn League and Covenant to seek its complete extermination, and caused the expulsion of the Stuart dynasty. Down with prelacy and up with presbytery was the shout of a reformed and liberated church, especially among the Reformed, who rejected the different orders of ministers which even Luther was willing to tolerate, and who gloried in the name which at once pointed out their specific difference and seminal principle. And the long series of fearful persecutions endured at the hands of both Popery and Prelacy has imbued the minds of all Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians with a cherished ancestral love of the simple presbyter and their own appointed representatives and elders.

The Reformers, says Principal Hill, "*laid the foundation of Presbyterian church government on this principle, that all ministers are equal in rank and power.*"\*

But to all this it is objected, that this attaches to our name as a church nothing that is peculiar to it. But were it so, a denominational name very rarely, if ever, expresses what is peculiar, but rather what is prominent. In its original and undivided condition, the doctrine of the presbyter was peculiar to Presbytery, and was carried as a fundamental basis, by every separating body, into their distinctive organizations. Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists, are therefore to this extent Presbyterians, and have received names indicative of their points of difference. And, in truth, it could easily be shown that the doctrines of the unity of the church as catholic, and the principle of representation, are embodied more or less fully in the creeds of other churches besides the Presbyterian.† As a generic church, in contrast to Popery and Prelacy, the presbyter is the essential characteristic of Presbytery. The Presbyterian church is, therefore, a historic rather than a denominational title. It is generic, and not specific. It is founded upon the doctrine of the presbyter, and not of the ruling elder.

Before leaving this point, let us press the considerations, that this theory would actually sectarianize our holy catholic church, diminish her sun into a satellite, and thus obscure her glory. Our founders and fathers—Paul being witness—abjured any name that would narrow the one foundation, or substitute man and his measures for Christ and his glorious gospel. Enter not, O my soul, into their counsels, who would restrict that name which has waved in bannered and exultant triumph amid the

\*See his whole exposition in his View, as above, and p. 43, &c., 8vo edit.; and his Lecture on Presbytery and Episcopacy, in his Lectures on Divinity. Paul Henry suggests this reason, (Life of Calvin, vol. i. p. 398,) on the whole argument, to which we could only allude.

†See the Platform of the Congregationalists, issued by their Board, 1855.

smoke and flame of many a battle, and in the hands of many a dying martyr, to the shibboleth of any party! Let it remain, as it was intended to be, a platform so simple, catholic, and broad, that all who believe in one generic order of divinely commissioned ministers—and this will include not only non-Episcopal, but many also among Episcopal communions—and also in holding forth to perishing sinners the pure gospel of the grace of God, may cordially work and strive together in furthering the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace.

*The Destructive Tendencies of this Theory.*

We have thus applied the axe to both root and branch of this new theory, growing, under such powerful and combined stimulus, to a portentous influence. None are abler advocates, or more ardent lovers of the doctrines, order, and polity of the Presbyterian church, than many of its defenders; nor would any abjure more solemnly than they, the dangerous consequences which, if generally adopted, it would logically entail. This theory, however, we do regard as, in its logical consequences, destructive to Presbyterianism—to the ministry, to one fundamental historical proof of Christianity, to the eldership, and to the deaconship—and in its controversy, needlessly provocative of division and debate among brethren, who love one another and the honoured mother of us all.

1. This theory is, *logically, destructive to the argument for Presbyterianism*, by making—just as prelatists wish us to do—our middle term equivocal, and our conclusion sophistical. The argument for Presbyterian polity against Popery, Prelacy, and Erastian “Popularity,” (as Owen and others were wont to call a purely democratic polity,) is this: The twelve apostles, and the seventy others, commissioned by Christ to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, must have permanent successors—according to the commission, promise, and ascension gift of Christ—as the teachers and rulers of the church, “always, unto the end of the world.” But the only permanent successors of the apostles, as teachers and rulers in the church, are PRESBYTERS; (*otherwise called*, synonymously, *bishops, leaders, presidents, pastors and teachers, angels, ambassadors, heralds, &c.*) Therefore, *presbyters* are the only permanent ministerial successors of the apostles.

This argument, around which all the research and reasoning of the many champions of presbytery are gathered, requires two points to be established. It is necessary first to prove that all these terms are used for one office and order—that is, for the PRESBYTER; and secondly, that the term *presbyter* refers unequivocally to *ministers*. For when prelatists are compelled

to admit the overwhelming demonstration of this fact, they save themselves by appealing to "the miserable sophistry of names." "*Presbuteros*—i. e. *presbyter*," argued Dr. Mason's prelatial opponents, "signifies an elder man, whence alderman. By this new species of logic, it might be proved that the apostles were aldermen, and aldermen apostles." (*Mason's Works*, vol. ii. p. 40.) This is a standing Romish argument. "To translate *presbyter* by *elder*," say they, "is as wise and reasonable as if a man should translate *major Londini*, greater of London, and not *mayor*; and *Universitas Oxoniensis* the *generality*, and not the *University* of Oxford.\*

Now, in his unanswerable and triumphant argument, Dr. Mason establishes the position that "the officers of the church are distributed, *without a single exception*, into the two general classes of presbyters or bishops, and deacons;" that these must mean something *official* and *appropriate*, and *fixed*; that they are *particular*, and not *general*, since it is impossible to believe that such an immense society should "be destitute of names by which the officers might be correctly known, so that when an official term is mentioned, no ingenuity could guess whether an officer inspired or uninspired, ordinary or extraordinary, highest or lowest, in the church was intended." He proceeds to show from Acts xv. that apostles and presbyters are *specific* terms of office, and from the regular ordination of presbyters in every city, and qualifications given in particular instructions, that these are not *general* terms of office, from which a prelate as well as a presbyter might be inferred, but "were as distinctive, and were annexed to certain officers with as much regularity and exactness as any official terms can be at this day;" and that "the allegation of the hierarchy [*and our theorists*] that the term presbyter is an indefinite term, *signifying merely a ruler* without reference to his station, [*as a minister*], is altogether false, and the objection, [*and the distinction into two classes, officially distinct*], founded upon this allegation, is altogether frivolous." (Pp. 48, 40.) In pursuing his opponent, who prosecutes his argument from "the promiscuous use of the terms presbyter and bishop in the sacred writings," Dr. Mason shows that "his conclusion is vain, because the premises are false," in overlooking "the distinction between the *absolute* and relative use of terms." "The sum is that the terms apostle, bishop, presbyter, and deacon, designate *with precision* officers known and established in the apostolic church." (Pp. 60, 48.) To admit, therefore, that the term presbyter designates two classes of officers, the one clerical and the other *lay*, (as Dr. Mason calls elders, vol. i. p. 191,) is therefore to destroy the whole argument on which Presby-

\*See in Fulke's Defence, pp. 267, 268.



terianism rests.\* "Presbyterianism," says Dr. Baird, "is so called (and is what it is called) because it is governed by presbyters, and not by prelates." (*Religion in America, Art. Presbyterianism.*)

2. But, secondly, this theory is, by the same argument, shown to be destructive to the ministry, as a distinct order and office in the church. That it is both, the Provincial Assembly of London prove, in their unanswerable work on the Divine right of the gospel ministry,† by many arguments, one of which is, "From the *peculiar* names or titles whereby they are distinguished from other saints. "If God hath given peculiar names and titles . . . then this office is by Divine institution. For as the judgment of God is, so are the denominations which God giveth to things, *according to truth*. Surely the only wise God will not distinguish where he himself hath made no difference. But God hath given *peculiar* names and titles to ministers, such as: 1. pastors, (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Peter v. 2;) 2. teachers, (1 Cor. xii. 28; Gal. vi. 6;) 3. rule well, (1 Tim. v. 17;) 4. presidents, (Heb. xiii. 17, 24;) 5. superintendents and overseers of the flock, (1 Peter v. 2; Acts xx. 18; 1 Peter iv. 15,)" &c. Other arguments are drawn from the peculiar gifts and qualifications enjoined—the peculiar duties required of them, and towards them; the particular promises made to them; and many more.

Dr. Owen says, "Four things are required unto the constitution of a divine office, 1. An especial trust. 2. An especial mission or commission. 3. An especial name. 4. An especial work." (*Works*, iv. 355.) He repeats these proofs of a divinely instituted office, and gives twelve arguments to sustain the divine institution and authority of the ministry, including those above-mentioned, and all the texts usually given and involved in this discussion. (1 Pet. v. 2, &c.; Acts xx. 28; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13; 1 Cor. xii. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1-7; Tit. i. 5-9; Rev. ii. 1-5; Heb. xiii. 7, 17; 1 Tim. v. 17; and also all the names and titles in question; such as pastor or shepherd, bishop, elder (*presbyter*,) ruler, including "pastoral feeding, teaching, and ruling," &c. "On this office and the discharge of it, Christ," says he, "hath laid the whole weight of *the order, rule, and edification of his church*, in his name and by virtue of his authority." (Vol. xvi. 47-54.) In vol. ix. on Eph. 4, 8,‡ he proves the ministry to be the gift of Christ, "*the office, and*

\*We cannot, as we would have wished, enforce this argument from Dr. Killen's *Ancient Church*. Compare pp. 550, 551, 552, 553, 562, 563, 568-585, Hill's *View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 19-28, &c. Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 434. Schaff's *Apost. Church*, p. 525, and every writer from Blondel to Dr. Miller, Shimeall, Coleman, &c.

†See *Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*, pp. 1-202.

‡He here assumes that pastor and teacher refer to the same office.



the persons to discharge that office." Gifts, says he, (*even the charisma of teaching*) "make no man a minister; but all the world cannot make a minister without gifts." He shows that the power in the church to call a minister consists in an absolute compliance with the command of Christ. "No church can make a man *formally* a minister that Christ hath not made so *materially*." "The way whereby the church doth call or constitute any person unto this OFFICE thus appointed, is by giving themselves up unto him in the Lord." (Pp. 431-436.)

This theory, therefore, annihilates the divine right, institution, and independence of the ministry. It deprives it of any peculiar name or title, "ordained, defined, and limited by God himself."\* Every name is converted into an appellative, and made to refer to the ministry only as one of two classes, or rather, the *function* or work of a portion of one class; and to refer primarily to the ruling elder. Every qualification is, in like manner, appropriated to the ruling elder, with every function, promise, responsibility, and required obedience, love, and honour. THE ministry is not among Christ's gifts, for ruling elders are "pastors and teachers," and are to be "apt to teach." It takes away all precision from official names, office, and work. They are neither ordained, limited, nor defined. The ministry is only "a new function, a gift added to a ruling elder and making him a teaching elder." But gifts, we have seen, without a direct authoritative mission to a divinely instituted OFFICE, "ordained, defined, and limited," cannot make any man a minister.†

On this theory, any man who believes himself to be gifted and called, is an authorized minister. Why not? if he can get people to believe as he does. This theory led to some thirty sects, with self-ordained lay preachers, at the time of the Westminster Assembly; and to all the melancholy evils during the great awakening so loudly deplored by Tennent and Edwards.‡ This theory has led the Virginia pastor and reviewer logically and practically to the same conclusion. The large body of Campbellites act upon this theory. "A Christian," they say, "is by profession a preacher of truth and righteousness, both by precept and example. He may of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper, as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it." (*Chris. Sys.* p. 85.) Mr. Fall says: "We do not 'deny a gospel ministry,' as you charge; but we do deny the *exclusive claims* of any body of men, distinct from the body of the people to the sole right of teaching the people,

\*This is Dr. Breckinridge's proof of a divinely instituted office. (Vol. ii. p. 652.) And "every thing has a divine authority or no authority, at all." (Ibid. p. 542.)

†See Jus. Div. Min. Evang., pp. 67, 115.

‡See Neal's Puritans and Hodge's Constitutional History, vol. ii. 99, 100.

of preaching the gospel, and of administering ordinances. We consider this the quintessence of Popery."§ (P. 42.)

The Plymouth Brethren in England, and in their extended churches and members over the world, are distinguished by this rejection of a distinctive office of ministry, and have only general officers to rule, who may, any or all, preach. Now, as Dr. Thornwell observes, "extreme cases prove principles," and if we would avoid a similar *result* we must crush the serpent in the egg.\*

This *theory*—not its advocates—is certainly Romish in that it makes ruling and the ruler paramount, and preaching and the preacher subordinate; since it makes the ruler fundamental and first, and the minister only a new function or gift attached to it.

This theory is also suicidal. The *distinction* between the *potestas ordinis*, (*i. e.* "the power of teaching and administering the mysteries," which belongs to the minister or teaching elder, and the *potestas regiminis*, (*i. e.* power of rule or government,) is, says Dr. Breckinridge, "*fundamental*; and the *difference* in the exercise of the two powers is also *fundamental*, (pp. 641, 642,) *which distinction must exist also in those who hold the power, or else ALL of them MUST hold BOTH forms of church power, and the inherent distinction in the nature of the power, be liable to constant disregard.*" Now, the argument of Dr. Mason carries these premises with irresistible force to the conclusion, that there must be distinct and different names by which the holders of these powers, so *fundamentally* and inherently distinct, may be correctly known. To think otherwise is to attribute to God what never has happened in the affairs of men from father Adam down to the present A. D. 1860, and what is inconsistent with the nature and use of human language.†

And finally, on this point, by destroying the independence of the ministry, and making ministers representatives of the people, and dependent upon them, this theory destroys the balance of power inherent in the senatorial character of the ministry, and reduces our polity either to an oligarchy or a democracy, which even Dr. Owen repudiates.

3. Before passing to the bearing of this theory on the eldership, we would press upon our readers its disastrous effect in seriously undermining an argument for the truth of Christianity, which may be regarded as a key-stone in the arch, or a corner-stone in the building. An order of ministers, known as presbyters and bishops, has always existed, from the times of the apostles continuously to this day.

§Dr. Rice's Expositor, vol. ii. p. 191.

\*Southern Presbyterian Review, 1859, p. 619.

†See Works, vol. ii. pp. 44, 45, &c.

"Now," as Archbishop Whateley puts the argument, "if a century ago, or ten centuries ago, or at any other time, a number of men had arisen, claiming to be the immediate successors (as above described) of persons holding this office, when, in fact, *no such order of men had ever been heard of*, such a silly pretension would have been immediately exposed and derided. There must always, therefore, have existed such an order of men, from the time of those apostles, who professed to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection, and to work sensible public miracles in proof of their divine commission. And consequently, the Christian ministry is a standing *monument* to attest the *public proclamation* of those miraculous events at the very time when they are said to have occurred. Now at that time there must have been great numbers of persons able and willing to expose the imposture, had there been any.

"And you are to observe, that this argument for the truth of the sacred history is quite independent of any particular *mode* of appointing Christian ministers. If, for instance, these had been always elected by the people, and had at once entered on their office, without any ordination by other ministers, still, if they were but appointed (in whatever mode) as immediate successors of persons holding the same office, the argument is the same. That mode, indeed, of admitting men into the ministry, which was practised by the apostles, has in fact been retained in all ages of Christianity. But the argument we have been now considering is quite independent of this. It turns entirely on the mere fact of the *constant existence* of a certain order of men."

Now if it is true—as this theory, in its various forms, teaches—that the terms *presbyter* and *bishop*, by which this order of ministers is known to have always existed, and to have perpetuated itself, "are not applicable," as Dr. Thornwell explicitly concludes, "to preachers as ministers of the word;" and if, as he also declares, "it is clear, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that presbyters and ministers of the word are not synonymous terms," (see *Southern Presbyterian Review*, 1848, pp. 61, 66)—then the whole argument falls to the ground. For that such a succession of ruling elders, as distinct from ministers, can be clearly made out, is denied not only by infidels and by nine-tenths of the Christian world, but also, as we shall see, by a weighty number of the most learned Presbyterians.

4. *This theory destroys also, and for many of the same reasons, the ruling eldership.* It founds the office upon an equivocal term—upon an English rendering of the word (*καλως προεστωτες*) *the wise or judicious presidents*—upon a *very partially* supported interpretation of one single text, in contrariety to the universal criticism of all other denominations—



to the positive decision of the Westminster Assembly, and to its form of government, which is the received standard of all Presbyterian churches but the American. An office and a name based on such a foundation, must rest upon shifting sand amid ever-wasting tides.

Besides, either the ruling elder alone, or the minister alone, must be understood by presbyter and be designated in its qualifications, call, gifts, offices, and obligations; and it is very certain the Christian world will never dethrone her ministry to enthrone the eldership over her demolished empire.

But further. Legitimate interpretation, of which Calvin and Owen are examples, almost necessitates the honourable support and exclusive occupation of the presbyters in 1 Tim. v. 17, and 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, and is presumptive proof that they cannot be ruling elders.\*

Again. By clothing the eldership with all the names, and requiring for it all the qualifications, and imposing upon it all the duties, and fearful responsibilities, and laborious devotion attached in Scripture to presbyters, we render it impossible for any honest conscientious man to assume the office; since, if fit and prepared for such an eldership, he is of course fit and prepared for, and must feel impelled to desire the office of a minister.

Now, Dr. King acknowledges that the great difficulty of getting elders "would be rendered insuperable by attaching preaching to the office," and surely all the qualifications required for a bishop must include this under "aptness to teach," and the many other forms in which teaching, instructing, and admonishing are made their duty.

Dr. Thornwell, in the discourse referred to, said that we may err in raising the standard of qualifications for the eldership too high, and that good common sense, prudence, ardent piety, and active zeal, were all that the office required. But if ruling elders are the presbyters and bishops of Scripture, they must possess ALL their required qualifications, and perform ALL their duties, and be EVERY ONE of them *apt* to teach, trained, skilled, and officially devoted to teaching. This, and nothing short of this, is on this theory demanded, under the solemn sanction of a vow, and a "woe unto them," if faithless. "There prevails amongst us," says Dr. Adger, (p. 177, do.,) "too low a conception of what the office is, and what it involves. The ruling elder is not a mere assistant of the minister. He is a high spiritual officer in Christ's house. He is a shepherd of the blood-bought flock. He rules in Emanuel's

\*Dr. King, on the eldership, allows that "it must be admitted that the word translated *honour* does sometimes allude to pay or wages, and that the allusions which follow do seem to favour this interpretation. Dr. Wardlaw argues from it as incontrovertible. See in do. 37, 35.



kingdom. He is a judge in the courts of the Lord. Sitting in that court he has committed to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven—and as he binds or looses on earth, it is bound or loosed in heaven!"

Let our elders think of this. If *presbyters*, they must be all this, or else rashly assume an office for which they may have neither the call, the qualifications, nor the desire. And then, by this theory, the elder ceases to be a layman, or properly a representative of the people. Not being a layman, he is of course a clergyman, "for he is not," says Dr. Breckinridge, "*by any means a different order*,"† and as "the government of the church is exclusively in the hands of elders," (do. p. 632,) it follows that the government of the church is a clerical oligarchy. For it is not the existence of a sacred order or ministry, called and commissioned by Christ, and as independent of the laity as is a Senate in relation to a House of Representatives, that constitutes a hierarchy or priestcraft. No, but it is the exclusion of the *laity* and of the representatives of the laity, as a separate and independent house of lay delegates that makes a despotic priestcraft, a prelacy. And such a prelacy is logically created by this theory, which must land us either in Dr. Owen's abhorred "popularity," (i. e. *democracy*,) or in a clerical oligarchy of "ONE ORDER." The principle of representation is destroyed, and with it our glorious free representative and conservative commonwealth, of which we may say in the language of Milton, "it is the divinest, noblest, safest, and freest commonwealth that can be established among men."

Nay, by this theory, the very *existence* of ruling elders at any time, or anywhere, either in apostolic or subsequent times, is seriously endangered. The evidence for a divinely instituted *presbyter*, that is not by office and ordination qualified to preach and administer sacraments, &c., has been called in question on critical and historical grounds by many of our own ablest judges, and best friends. Dr. Miller admits that many of his brethren rejected it. Principal Hill regards the evidence for it as very slender. (View, as before.) Dr. Wilson of Philadelphia seached in vain to find such mute presbyters during the first three centuries. Professor Jamieson of Scotland, one of the ablest and most learned champions of presbytery, after having published in favour of such presbyters, publicly renounced it.\* He quotes Blondel as of the same opinion, and many Presbyterians. The Westminster Assembly rejected the *name* ruling elder, which had been even voted upon, &c.,† 1 Tim. v. 17, as a proof-text for any such presbyter. Baxter says this was the prevalent opinion among Presbyterians in his

†Dr. Breckinridge, vol. ii. p. 641.

\*Sum of the Episcopal Controversy, p. 87. Cyprianus Isotimus, p. 541.

†See in Gillespie's Notes.

day.‡ It was also, as we have seen, among the French Presbyterian churches, and those of the Remonstrants. Mr. Boyce, in his very able work on the Ancient Episcopacy, (p. 208,) affirms (and quotes Blondel as believing) that "the primitive presbyters were all ordained to the sacred office of the ministry." Gieseler rejects the distinction made by this theory. Mosheim does the same. Dr. Coleman and Riddle, in their "Antiquities of the Christian Church," founded upon Augusti and others, declare against this theory. Selden and Lightfoot, the greatest Hebraists of modern times, were against it in the Westminster Assembly. Vitrina, to whom all our knowledge of the synagogue is now chiefly referred, expresses himself in the most unqualified manner. "I am not," he says, "opposed to lay elders, but contrariwise greatly like them. I will not, however, offend against the brotherhood, of which I form a part, if I openly declare that I am able to find no such elders in the apostolical church of the first age; none such in the church of the age following; none in the *writings* of the apostles, or in the records of the age following, as far as they have been examined by me or others. This opinion, in which I have long been fully confirmed, I consider it no fault freely to divulge, though contrary to that of others, and which no other reason or presumption than the force of truth has compelled me to embrace. And can any one then dare," he adds, "seriously to assert and to defend the position that to these *lay elders* the name of *bishop*, or the name of *pastor*, can be appropriated? And if no one can so dare, then the question is settled concerning them, since no other presbyters (or elders) are acknowledged or constituted in the church of the Apostles, except those who are at the same time pastors and bishops," &c.\* Professor Jamieson, as referred to above, uses similar language: "I can't find," says he, "during the first three centuries express mention of these seniors or ruling elders; for I freely pass from (i. e. *abandon*) some words of Tertullian and Origen, which I elsewhere mentioned as containing them, and so also from what I said of the Ignatian *presbyters* being ruling or non-preaching elders."† The very learned non-conformist writer, Clarkson, of whom Baxter says he was a man of "extraordinary worth for solid judgment and acquaintance with the Fathers," &c., coincides in this judgment, and so do many others.§

Finally, Rothe, the most learned living antiquarian of Germany, has found, upon elaborate investigation, that the supposed *ruling presbyters* of the North African churches, the

‡Orme's Life of, pp. 74, 77, and on Episcopacy.

\*De Vet. Synag. p. 484.

†Jamieson's Cyprianus Isotimus, p. 544.

§Primitive Episcop. pp. 92, 100, 104, 105. See others referred to in Bib. Report. 1843, p. 327.

*seniores plebis*—Tertullian, Augustine, and Hilary, were, without doubt, laymen distinguished from, and set over against the clergy, and no other than the civil magistrates within the parish or congregation—*nobilissimi*. (See p. 237. Schaff also takes a similar view, *Apost. Church*, 239.) Dr. Killen ignores this remarkable discovery.

Is it then, we ask, expedient to rest the office of ruling elders upon a text and a distinction so plainly repudiated by our greatest authorities and acknowledged standards, and by claiming that they are and must be *presbyters*, imperil their Divine warrant, and weaken their authority and influence?

This theory, therefore, by attempting to make the *ruling elder* the *presbyter*, and destroying his true glory and dignity as the representative of the Christian body under Christ, for the election of their own officers, endangers their very existence itself.

But to all this it is replied that the view we have presented of the ruling elder as "properly the representative of the people," "and not properly the presbyter of Scripture, as Dr. Thornwell announced to the last General Assembly, destroys the office altogether." But how? Does it not ascribe to it scriptural titles and functions, scriptural exemplifications, and actual exercise? And do not these secure for it a divine right, divine appointment and institution, under the immediate sanction and authority of Christ, the only King and Head of the church? We do not say that it is, as Dr. Thornwell does when he represents in order to refute our views, (*South. Pres. Review*, 1848, p. 51,) "the creature of the people, possessed of no other powers but those they have chosen to entrust to it." The appointment of officers as representatives of the people in the "discipline and distribution" of the church, is by Christ's institution and authority as much and as truly as that there shall be particular churches regularly organized whom they represent, and "in whose name they act." (*Form of Gov.* chap. i. § 3.) These are not contradictories. They are both true, both by divine right, both made authoritative by the power, and regulated by the word of Christ. "It is the true doctrine of the Scriptures," we agree with Dr. Thornwell and Dr. Owen, whom he quotes, (See do., p. 52,) "that all church power *in actu primo*, or fundamentally, is in the church itself, *in actu secundo* or its exercise in them that are especially called thereunto," and we again cordially unite with both (do., p. 531,) in the statement, "while, therefore, all church power, which is nothing but a right to perform church duties in obedience to the commands of Christ, and according unto his mind, is originally given unto the church essentially considered, yet, *in all regularly organized churches*, it has evidently "a double exercise—1. The call or choosing of



officers; 2. In their voluntary acting with them, and under them in all duties of rule." Our standards, and our Reformers, and all Presbyterian Confessions maintain both facts. In opposition to Erastianism, they teach "that Christ hath appointed officers not only to preach, &c., but to exercise discipline for," &c. And in opposition to Romanists and Prelatists, they teach "that it is incumbent upon these officers, AND UPON THE WHOLE CHURCH IN WHOSE NAME THEY ACT, to censure or cast out the erroneous or scandalous." (*Form of Gov.* chap. i. § 3, quoted as above, p. 52.) In many ways our congregations exercise this power. The first act of "The Congregation" in Scotland, was to organize and elect officers, though they had as yet no minister. And Gillespie in one of his later works, and while establishing the above doctrine, vindicates and shows the consistency of an opinion formerly avowed, "that nothing should be done without the concurrence of the people or congregation."

Dr. Thornwell may, therefore, pronounce his suppositious theory, "without hesitation, absolutely false;" but our view he cannot, without self-contradiction, charge with destroying the eldership. When, however, he affirms that consistency requires "to abolish the office as a human contrivance, and a useless appendage to the church," when "the arguments for its divine appointment drawn from the natural meaning of the title, the *acknowledged* (?) constitution of the Jewish Synagogue, and the plurality of elders, confessedly ordained in the apostolic churches are rejected; and when he declares it to be "idle to tell us that Paul speaks of GOVERNMENTS, and using the abstract for the concrete, means governors themselves," although on the next page (p. 59,) he quotes our Form of Government (chap. v. book 1.) where the very passage and term, *governments*, is quoted in proof of ruling elders, we may well ask which theory tends to the destruction of the office.\*

*But in the fifth and last place, this theory is logically destructive to the Deaconship.* It ignores its existence as an office instituted by Christ, for the assistance of the elders and ministers, in the full and proper administration of his church. "Government," it is said, "is *exclusively* in the hands of *elders*," and "deacons *have no power* of regimen or order." What, then, we ask, are they? God hath set them in his church as ordinary and permanent office-bearers. Their creation, name, qualifications, election, ordination, and personal names, even,

\*If it is asked, as it may well be, what is the great practical benefit sought by this theory, the answer is, the right of ruling elders to impose hands in ordination, "a *potentiality*," which has never yet been developed into exercise under the constitutional authority of any Presbyterian church in the world, and as Dr. Miller's learned correspondent assured him, certainly not in the Church of Scotland.



are handed down to us. They have existed, without disputation, and with special honour put upon such as discharge the office well, always, everywhere, until the theory in question led practically to the absorption of them in the office of ruling elder, as is declared to have been the case in Scotland by Principal Hill, and in Ireland by the Book of Discipline, and in the United States by Dr. Wilson and Dr. Miller.†

Now, deacons were required to be men full of Christian zeal, faith, wisdom, prudence, and exemplary piety, sound, and well instructed in the truth, holding the ministering of the faith in a pure conscience. Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost and power, and he immediately began to speak for Jesus; "and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." Another of them, Philip, was so gifted as to be afterwards an "evangelist." From their connection with the *agapai*, or love-feast, (Acts vi. 2,) and the general care of the poor, they are believed to have had the supervision of, and to have assisted in the daily administration of the Lord's Supper, and other services of the church, (Acts ii. 42.) And it is accordingly declared, that they who use this office well, "purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. iii. 9-13.) Taken from among the people; chosen entirely by them; intimately acquainted with all their wants—they are admirably qualified to assist the pastor and elders with counsel and co-operation, in everything common to their mutual interests, and to their special department of general temporal and charitable ministration, and to constitute a bond of living union between them and the people.

The most ancient authorities of the purest and primitive age, undoubtedly represent them as assisting ministers in their religious services and other official duties. "They whom we call deacons," says Justin Martyn, "distributed the consecrated bread and wine and water to each one that is present." The same service is enjoined in "The Apostolical Constitutions." They had general oversight of the assembly during religious worship, and distributed the alms. In the church of Scotland, whose *first* formal act of organization was the appointment of elders and deacons, the minister breaks the bread and distributes the cup, "all the while the elders *and deacons*, in a competent number, and in a grave and reverend manner, do attend about the table, to see . . . that all who are admitted may have the bread and wine,"\* &c.

"Deacons are not only to distribute the charity of the church

†Miller on Ruling Elders, pp. 237, 238, 242. Dr. Wilson Princ. Gov., and Hill's View of the Church of Scotland.

\*Compend of Laws, vol. i., p. 306. Pardovan, Book II., § 20, tit. iv.

to the poor, but ought also to visit them at their own houses, counsel them, pray with them, and otherwise assist them." So speaks Mr. Lorimer. And in the Irish Church Discipline it is said, "they should *exhort* the poor to be rich in faith, and to become heirs of the kingdom of God." (P. 7.)

The deacon, therefore, is not only an ecclesiastical and spiritual officer, like elders, but "he is," as Mr. Lorimer remarks, "to a certain extent a *ruler*, . . . ruling their own family well, being one of the tests by which he is to be proved."\* "To them," says our Form of Government, "may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church." What our standards say deacons *may properly* do, their First and Second Book of Discipline make positively their duty: "Their office and power is to receive and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods unto them to whom they are appointed, . . . that the patrimony of the kirk be not converted to men's private use, nor wrongfully." Under this patrimony is drawn out whatever pertains to property held, rents, bequests, collections, and income generally; and the support of ministers, teachers, schools, churches, manses, &c. The office of deacon is, in short, the treasury department and municipal or home government of the church, and as important and honourable in its sphere as the legislative and executive functions; and when *properly* officered and invested with its rightful authority, it evidently holds in its hands the efficiency and prosperity of each particular church.

Deacons, therefore, have always been considered as united in the general polity of the church, and as having rule—within their sphere, and under the authority and direction of the pastor and elders—exercised in a common council. "We believe," says the Belgic Confession, Art. 30, "the true church ought to be *ruled* with that spiritual polity which God hath taught us in his word, to wit, that there be pastors to preach the word purely elders *and deacons* to constitute the ecclesiastical senate." The Book of Common Order, drawn up by Knox, in Geneva, approved by Calvin, and established in Scotland, and by the Puritans, who endeavored to have it made the polity of England, treats, in chap. v., of "the weekly assembly of ministers, elders, and *deacons*."† In the First Book of Discipline, chap. x., § 11, the office of deacon is described as above, and it is said, "they may also assist in judgment with ministers and elders, and may be admitted to read in the assembly, if they be required and be able thereto." This Book also provides, that if the minister was of light conversation, the elders *and deacons* should admonish him."

\*On the Office of Deacon, pp. 59, 70.

†This Book was usually prefixed to the Psalms in Metre, in Scotland.

In the first Book of Discipline, chap. viii. § 6, it is provided that "if any extraordinary sums are to be delivered. then must the ministers, elders, and deacons consult whether," &c. The second Book of Discipline divides the whole polity of the church into doctrine, discipline, and distribution, with its three-fold officers—pastors, elders, and deacons—who are "to be called and elected as the rest of the spiritual officers;" and as their duties are to be performed at the discretion, and by the appointment of pastors and elders, "for this cause, and not for regimen, *they are to be present at the ordinary meetings of the eldership.*" Guthrie of Stirling, in his *Treatise of the Ruling Elders and Deacons*, 1699,\* says: "It is also true that the deacons may assist in judgment with the minister and elders, and be helping to them in those things that concern the oversight of the congregations, by information and advice." "Deacons are not to count light of this employment, or any others to esteem lightly of them . . . but as one of those holy and honourable employments which the wisdom of God thought fit to appoint." In 1705, the General Assembly declared: "The kirk session, being the lowest judicatory in every parish, consists of one minister or two, and a competent number of ruling elders, *and the deacons of that parish are to be present, and have a decisive vote, only (however) in matters belonging to their own office.*"† The Form of Government of the Westminster Assembly in the chapter "of the officers of a particular congregation," enumerates "one at least to labour in the word and doctrine, AND TO RULE," "others to *join* in government;" and "others to take special care of the poor;" and adds: "*These officers are to meet together* at convenient and set times for the well ordering of the affairs of that congregation, each according to his office." "As to the members that constitute parochial sessions," says old Ayton,‡ "they are ministers of the word, ruling elders, *and deacons.*" And "serving tables," he interprets (p. 624,) as including "care and inspection of the poor, and the distribution of the elements at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Our own standards place deacons among the necessary officers in a fully organized church, as given by Christ, and shows their estimate of their status as rulers *quoad hoc*, by appointing in one and the same chapter one and the same mode of election and ordination, for *ruling elders and deacons*, thus making them authoritatively coördinate or joint officers in the church. The representative principle in our polity requires and implies some primary court lower than the session or

\*Published by order of the general meeting of the ministers and elders of the church.

†See in Edward Irving's *Standards of the Church of Scotland*, Appendix, p. 154.

‡Original Constitution of the Church. Edinburgh, 1730, p. 619.

coördinate with it, in which pastor, elders, and deacons, may meet and deliberate on all matters of common jurisdiction, and in which the deacons may exhibit their records, and have them reviewed, and receive the common and co-equal judgment of all present for their direction; and this is found, and we think in a perfect form, in the deacon's court, as now established and in use in the Free Church of Scotland in this country,† in the constitution and practice of the Reformed Dutch church, and to some partial extent in our own church. This theory, therefore, which ignores and repudiates the deaconship as a branch of the polity of the church, is evidently in contrariety to the representative character, the balance of power, the division of power, and the whole historical constitution of the Presbyterian church throughout the world.

And now, in closing, let us say that, of course, we exempt these theorists from any sympathy with the logical results of their theory. God forbid we should so malign them. Rather would we exalt them. And we would hope that, with their abilities and their knowledge of the theory and practice of government, they may carry out the principle of representation to a perfect system in accordance with the uniform established character of the Presbyterian polity, so that without division or diversion, we may all walk by the same rule and mind the same things, and strive together in love for the furtherance of the gospel, and the glory of our beautiful Zion.

We do not doubt that the foregoing papers prepared by our learned friend with so much labour will prove of permanent value, not only on account of their ability, but for the amount of important matter which they contain. EDITOR.

†Digest of Rules of Procedure of the Free Church of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1856, chap. i.





# Theories of the Eldership

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By REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

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EDITORIAL NOTE.—The following discussion on "Theories of the Eldership" was written in the years 1860 and 1861, for the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, then published in Fayetteville, N. C. Dr. Robt. L. Dabney, to whom they were mainly addressed, was then Professor in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. Drs. J. H. Thornwell and John B. Adger, frequently mentioned in the discussion, were Professors in the Columbia Theological Seminary. Drs. Smyth and Adger were brothers-in-law. The debate in the Southern Church on these subjects continuing until about 1878, was a battle between giants. Dr. Smyth was the leader on one side. He showed himself a skillful warrior, mighty and well-armed. Many believe that though the votes were finally against him, he won the victory on the field of truth and history for the theory he defended.

# THEORIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.

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## REPLY TO PROFESSOR DABNEY.

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### NO. I.

*Divine right—His divinely authorized officers assumes the question and is different from the Reformers and Dr. Breckinridge—His proof texts cross questioned—His development theory of the church contrary to Dr. Miller and to facts—Other points of essential difference from Dr. Miller—The meaning and use of the term laity—Unfair statement of our views—By his reasoning ruling elders may constitute a full-fledged presbytery—Our government taught to be a government of one order of clergy—His theory and that of the Southern Presbyterian Review are antagonistic to Dr. Miller's views.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: I take the earliest possible opportunity, since my return, to procure extras of your paper containing five articles on the above subject in review of three in the *Princeton Repertory*, and of Dr. Hodge's separate article on Presbyterianism. I most heartily concur in all that has been said of their ability and of "the factitious importance far above their ability, received by those articles from their appearance in the *Princeton Review*." But as my object is not personal but public, and I seek not victory but a fair hearing for Dr. Hodge and the *Princeton Review* on a subject of great present and practical interest, you and your readers will, I am sure, give a candid hearing to one who pleads inability to cope with the giants in the land and asks to be heard not for his own sake but for the truth's sake.

We will follow the course of the reviewer and will now take up article number one of Sep. 22.

We agree in the opinion that our view of the Eldership will be limited and bounded by that taken of its divine warrant. We also agree to most that is urged for the necessity of such divine authority and its general principles. On this point Dr. Hodge, the *Repertory* and the reviewer are very much at one.

The difficulty however of applying that principle to particulars, is at once apparent when Dr. D. says he does not "pretend to find an explicit divine warrant for many details under this plan, but we pretend that precisely three classes of official function art assigned, viz: preaching, inspection and deaconship, so



that there are three names of office and no more, viz : the preaching elder, the ruling elder and the deacon." But this is 1. A quiet assumption of the whole question, 2. It condemns the whole body of the Reformers, the Books of Discipline, the Westminster Form of Government and the Scotch church standards, who all include among the ordinary and perpetual officers of the Church, Pastors, Teachers or Doctors, other church governors which Reformed churches commonly call Elders and Deacons, 3. It condemns Dr. R. J. Breckinridge and many others, who hold that Evangelists are permanent officers in the church, when ever the occasion demands their employment; and 4. He condemns himself, for he confesses afterwards the great difficulty of deciding which of the officers enumerated by the Apostle Paul are temporary or permanent.

On the whole, however, with this exception, we can subscribe to his outline of Presbyterianism as divinely warranted. Let us bring together his rules for interpreting what is and what is not divinely instituted and warranted.

1. The church is not at liberty to invent any distinct *substantive additions* to her system.

2. The government of a church is to contain only what is granted without any *substantial* addition in the way of further *development*. And the reason is the church no longer has inspired men to guide her.

3. And yet we do not pretend to find divine warrant for *many details* under this plan. But we pretend that all these details *undetermined* by express divine warrant, *ought to be determined by the church, in accordance* with the definite *character* of the divine *outline*.

Now, if our readers think that after the application of these rules exemplified above, they can fix accurately the meaning of these several terms and then make an infallible application of the rules in every case, they have a great deal more confidence in their own judgment than we have in ours.

The proof is found for all this in Math. 28: 18, 19, Christ's commission; in the enumeration of offices given to the church, in Eph. 4: 11, so diversely interpreted by these theorists in opposition to its almost universally received meaning; and from 1 Cor. 12: 28, whose enumeration puzzles even himself and is repudiated as illogical by Dr. Thornwell when alleged in this very controversy, for "it is idle," says Dr. T., "to tell us that Paul speaks of governments and, using the abstract for the concrete, means governors themselves."

Acts 15: 28 again is a charter of liberty of conscience against attaching divine right and the Holy Spirit's authority to any but "necessary things."

2 Cor. 13: 10 is an assertion of Apostolic, personal and plenary power, and yet even that is not absolute to enforce any thing, but to be employed for edification.

In giving a summary of the matter, he holds that Christ gave to his church "a set of officers and an organism" which was gradually developed, feature by feature, and first the eldership, then the deaconship, &c. Now surely this—which is Neander's theory—is a grand mistake. For Christ had already commissioned a ministry first of twelve and afterwards of seventy, and afterwards in his final commission of a regular standing and permanent ministry; and again when he ascended, he gave pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry. The first act of his church was an election of an apostle. The daily habit of the church was continuance in social worship, including doctrine, fellowship and prayer. We next read of the appointment of deacons, long before we read of elders. From the day of Pentecost we find preaching to be the primary manifestation of the life of the church, and of the Spirit's presence and power.

That is one of the numerous points in which this writer and the theory he advocates differ from Dr. Miller, Dr. Hodge and ourselves.—Dr. Miller, (Ruling Elders, p. 52,) "AS SOON as WE BEGIN to read of the apostles organizing churches on the New Testament plan, we find them instituting officers . . . . we find bishops, elders and deacons every where appointed."—No account of the elders however is given earlier than in Acts 11: 30.

Dr. D., however, claims to hold and to defend the theory of Dr. Miller, "whose justness of thought and soundness of deduction the church will yet learn to value more highly than it has been the fashion to do." To this we say amen. And against perverted views of the Eldership, claiming the authority of "this venerable man," whom we loved as a man, an instructor, a correspondent and a generous personal friend, we are now enlisted.

"This theory," says Dr. D., "teaches that the office of ruling elder is emphatically of divine institution in the church. It is the same so far as the powers of inspection and government go, with that of the preacher."

To this Dr. Hodge and ourselves can cheerfully assent, if by the word "same" is understood equipollent and co-ordinate.

But when Dr. D. goes on to say as for Dr. Miller, that "wherein the preacher is *presbyteros* and *episcopos*, he holds the same office in substance as the ruling elder. The difference is, that he has the additional function of acting as God's public ambassador in the word and sacraments," he gives not Dr. Miller's theory, but a more recent and novel theory con-

trary to it.—Dr. Miller does not teach that the preacher holds the same office as the ruling elder. Dr. Miller, with our standards, holds that the ministry has an office of its own, peculiar and paramount, and superior to that of the ruling elder. He called it, as our standards do in many places, “the sacred office,” and also, “holy office,” “one order of the ministry.” He held to three classes, orders or offices and officers, to two of which certain names are common. These names are bishop or overseer and presbyter. Pastor and teacher, and the other terms employed in scripture to designate the ministry, and which by this new theory are given equally to elders, Dr. M. restricts to ministers. He everywhere and constantly speaks of the office and its functions or duties as distinct; and of the office of the ministry, the office of ruling elders, and the office of deacons as distinct, and not to be “mixed or united in the same person, and of their functions and duties as being also distinct.

Dr. Miller's theory, therefore, is entirely different from this representation of it, as we might show by numerous quotations, and is in all these points the theory of Dr. Hodge and ourselves. So far from holding that ministers hold substantially the same office as ruling elders, he regarded “bearing rule” as a less honorable employment than “preaching.” (Christ. Min. p. 65.) To say the contrary he declares “to be refuted needs only to be stated.” (Do. 63.) And on p. 74 he says, “We deny the right of an inferior office (ruling eldership) to lay on hands in the ordination of a superior, and uniformly act accordingly.” (See also Ruling Eld. p. 69.)

According to Dr. Miller the difference is *not* that the minister has the additional function of preaching, &c., but that ministers as an order of office, are in scripture clothed with all the power given for the government of the church.

In regard to the use of the term clergy, Dr. Miller gave an opinion in perfect accordance with our own as given in the *Repertory*. “We have no zeal,” says Dr. M., (Ruling Elders, p. 211,) “for retaining or using the terms clergy and laity.” “Let the class of officers in question be called (*not Presbyters*) but Ruling Elders.—Let all necessary distinction be made.” Now we said no more. “Ruling Elders,” we said, “are laymen,” that is as the word literally and in universal usage means, they are not clergymen but are distinct from the clergy. “The term is altogether relative to office and order and not to dignity, worth or rank.” (Repert. 1860, p. 463.) Again we said, “In any invidious sense of the term ruling elders are not laity.” Dr. Miller admits all that we desire, 1st, That the earliest fathers made the distinction. 2nd, That it was general

in Cyprian's time. 3rd, That the term clergy was given to presbyters, &c.

As to ordaining elders with imposition of hands of the pastor and elders, we have for 29 years practically acted upon Dr. Miller's views, though neither he nor we could find precedent for it in either the practice or opinions of any reformed churches to the present day.

Dr. D. misrepresents our views, and like Dr. Adger, gives his inferences instead of our statements. Because we teach that in its proper official sense, ruling elders are not the presbyters of the New Testament, and that ministers are the fundamental and essential order of the church, in the last analysis, *he infers* that "if then this order is present, a full-fledged court is present, and all church powers may be legitimately exercised without ruling elders." Now no such inference follows. We can conceive of a church originated, organized and perpetuated—and we know one—without ruling elders but not without a ministry. True that church is not completely organized, but it proves that the ministry is the fundamentally essential office, and just so may a presbytery come together and, no ruling elders being present, *as they ought to be*, do business. Ruling Elders are virtually and by right, present; they may at any moment be actually present. Ministers are potentially ruling elders and can act for them when so required, and in the case supposed, the elders make it their duty so to act, and yet all they do can be reviewed, revised and reversed. But this is not a full-fledged and complete presbytery any more than the church spoken of. It is an exceptional case supposeable but scarcely probable. It is one of those cases excepted by Dr. D., "where under peculiar circumstances, these courts depute the temporary exercise of ruling powers," as in the cases of church-dedication, ordination, installation, &c.

But how is it on Dr. D.'s theory? Ministers and Elders hold in substance the same office; "as far as the powers of inspection and government go, they are the same," in name and office. The *only* difference is "the function of preaching," &c. If then at a regularly called meeting of presbytery only ministers are present, they are ruling elders and of the same order and office, and "so far as government goes, the same," and here therefore, "is a full-fledged presbytery." Nay more—it is so if only ruling elders are present, since in regard to government, name and order they are one and the same, and the business of presbytery is government and not preaching.

Dr. D. again misrepresents, and confutes no body, when he makes us teach "that nevertheless a church *may* if she *pleases* admit ruling elders as representatives of the people's rights." What we teach is that Christ has given to the people his *cleroi*



or *clergy*, that is (in the scriptural meaning of the term) *chosen*, a right to be represented and to elect their representatives, and that it is the duty of these representatives, so chosen to be present and to sit and vote as co-equal rulers in all church courts, and all this is so, and becomes fundamentally important, because ministers are not ruling elders but distinct in office or order, and in functions, and are not by office or election, or immediate delegation, properly the representatives of the people.

But on Dr. D.'s theory they are so, and are one and the same as to name and ruling power and representation of the people, and since on this theory, ministers are no more nor in any other sense "clergy" than elders are, therefore it follows that the people are represented in Session, Presbytery, &c, if only ministers are present, and that our church courts are every one made up of the one divine right order of clergymen, without a single layman or lay representative of the people being admitted into them. Our government, therefore, is, on this theory, a government of the one sacred and sacredly ordained, and alike ordained ORDER OF CLERGY.

We are again entirely misrepresented as to ordination of elders, which may be just as well performed on our theory as his, the minister in either case acting as the organ of the church, and the other elders as its representatives, in clothing with office and after all due solemnities their elected elder.

Now it will be, and must be evident to every reader that all "the astounding assertions by which the church has been startled at this late day, after having been brought, by the irrefragable facts and arguments of Dr. Miller and others following him, to a general acquiescence in the Scriptural view for a whole generation," are made by Dr. D. and not by Dr. Hodge or the writer.

Dr. Dabney with Dr. Adger, Dr. Breckinridge, Dr. Thornwell and the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, differ from the teachings of Dr. Miller on the Ruling Elder, in every essential particular, as to name, nature, qualifications, functions, office, order and relations to the ministry, the church and the people, and to ordination and standing.

Dr. Hodge and the writer on the contrary agree with Dr. Miller on every point except that he applies the term *presbyter generally* or in a large and loose sense, to the ministry as well as to the ruling eldership, and yet even on this point they agree more with Dr. Miller than do these writers, because he makes the ministry a distinct and superior office to the ruling eldership, and an office by itself, distinct both from the ministry and from the deaconship.

This we are prepared to prove, and will prove, and I hope, Messrs. Editors, you will transfer the proof to your paper, and allow your readers to look upon this picture and on that, and "proving all things, hold fast that which is good."

T. S.

NO. II.

*The question stated—What we deny and affirm—Dr. Miller differs from these theorists and agrees with us—What Dr. Miller did teach—The theory of Dr. D. recent and revolutionary—Changes our form of government—Dr. D.'s proofs examined—The synagogue in our favor—Our "strange blunder"—Dr. D.'s mistakes—His fatal admission—Our theory saves the eldership—The ministry not of divine right on his—Dr. D. and Dr. Miller again contrasted and Dr. D.'s argument confuted—Neander's theory avowed and disproved—Our next blunder—Concluding argument.*

The question now under discussion is not whether God has instituted ruling elders in his church, for this Dr. D. and those who agree with him, "profess to admit," though they undermine the foundation on which it scripturally and historically and constitutionally rests. But the question is, *are ruling elders the presbyters and bishops of the New Testament, whose duties and qualifications for office are given in Acts 20: 28-31, "Take heed of the flock of God OVER WHICH the Holy Ghost hath made YOU OVERSEERS (or as in the original, BISHOPS) to feed the church of God. Therefore watch and REMEMBER (as your model) that I ceased not to WARN every man NIGHT and DAY WITH TEARS;" also in 1 Tim. 3: 1-9, "A BISHOP MUST be blameless, APT TO TEACH, vigilant to TAKE CHARGE of the church of God." Also in Titus ch. 1, "A BISHOP must be blameless AS THE STEWARD OF GOD, HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORDS AS HE has been TAUGHT, that HE may be ABLE by sound doctrine both to EXHORT and to CONVINCETHE gain-sayers, whose MOUTHS must be stopped, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake (that is for the salary they receive). Wherefore REBUKE them sharply that they may be SOUND IN THE FAITH."*

"It is on this question," says Dr. D., and so do we, "that the whole difference of the two theories turns." Dr. D. affirms that these passages, and all others relating to bishops and presbyters, refer to ruling elders, such as 1 Pet. 5: 1-4, "The presbyters who are among you, I exhort who am also a presbyter. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (or bishopric) thereof, not by constraint but willingly,

not for filthy lucre, (or a salary) neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." Also James 5: 14, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the presbyters of the church, and let them pray over him." Also Eph. 4: 11, "where pastors and teachers" are spoken of. All these and others, it is affirmed, refer to ruling elders.

Now, this we deny. We affirm that all these refer to ministers, and we ask our Ruling Elders to search the scriptures and see if the Holy Ghost has required these qualifications and duties from ruling elders, and made them "pastors and teachers\* for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." If all these do refer to Ruling Elders, and if Ruling elders are as Dr. Adger says, "shepherds of the blood-bought flock, having committed unto them the keys of the kingdom of heaven," pastors of the flock, then, it is high time that churches and Elders should know it and act upon it.

Dr. D. asserts with Dr. Miller, that ruling elders are and ought to be all this,† and that in opposition to Dr. Miller, we make elders "a totally different and inferior order" to pastors and teachers, and that is to ministers.

Dr. Miller, however, never taught that ruling elders and ministers are one in order or office; or that they are equal in dignity. The very reverse is true. Dr. Miller taught that the ministry is an office or order by itself, "the sacred office," "one office," "one order;" that the eldership is an office or order distinct from that of the ministry and from that of the deaconship; that the eldership is "an inferior office," and the ministry "a superior," "the highest Christ instituted in his church;" that the ruling elder could not unite in the act of ordaining ministers by imposition of hands; and that while both in its *generic* sense were presbyters and bishops, ministers were such in an emphatic or "singular" sense, and that they alone are pastors and teachers. He taught that there ought to be a perfect separation of offices or orders, and in his chapters on the qualifications and duties of ruling elders, he does not apply to them the passages alleged to delineate them, nor does he require of them the duties they imply.

Dr. Miller's views are ours with one exception, and are without exception, when fairly stated, different from those of Dr. D. and Dr. Adger and others. We can cordially adopt all Dr. Miller has written on the nature, office, duties, qualifications and necessity of Ruling Elders, and as cordially accept most of his proofs for the importance, scriptural warrant, and for

\*Dr. Killen applies both terms to Ruling Elders and so does Dr. Adger. Dr. D. applies it in No. 4 to ministers. Who is right when such Doctors disagree?

†Whether he identifies them with pastors and teachers, we have not yet seen stated.

the continued existence, in perhaps every ancient church not Romish, of officers under various names, analogous to our Ruling Elders. We come also much nearer to Dr. Miller's use of the term *Presbyter* in a "generic sense," as applicable to all church officers and to Elders NO MORE than to ministers, than do these writers, for he admits also "a singular" or peculiarly emphatic use of it as applied to ministers. (See *Ruling Eld.* p. 45 and 69.) And in regard to the term *bishop*, still more so. (See p. 28, 44, 52, 69, &c., and *Christ. Min. passim*.)

From what we have said, and are ready to prove fully, it is perfectly manifest that the theory of Dr. Dabney, Dr. Adger and others, is NOT that of Dr. Miller, as they affirm it is, but is a recent novel development of Neander's theory, which Dr. Miller only in small part adopted. This theory is, as Dr. Hodge says, revolutionary, and makes our polity a government of one order of officers, and they clergy and not laity, instead of being what our Form of Government declares in the hands of three orders of "ordinary and perpetual officers," one of which consists of persons who "are properly the representatives of the people and chosen by them."

The first proof of Dr. Dabney, that Ruling Elders are the presbyters of scripture and the officers delineated in the above scriptural passages, is from the Elders of the Hebrew church and synagogue. Now in the *Repertory* for October, we have shewn that so far as any thing reliably certain can be known of the synagogue is, in every particular, contrary to this theory and in favor of ours. Vitranga, whose capacity to judge Dr. Miller fully admits, is not the only authority as Dr. D. affirms against him. Dr. Miller candidly admits that "Stillingfleet does not admit that any of the Elders of the synagogue or primitive church were lay-Elders but were," &c. (*Ruling Elders*. We adduced others and would refer to Bernard's recent work.)

As it regards our "strange blunder" "in confounding the Parnasim, the deacons or *waiting men* with elders," we did nothing of the kind. What we said was, "that Dr. Killen's proof from the synagogue proves also that IF similar to the Parnasim, they must be laymen." Dr. Killen affirms that "pastors and teachers" are identical, and that elders were the same as pastors and teachers, and in proof he says, "It is remarkable that the lay council of the modern synagogues are called Parnasim or Pastors," (p. 232, where he refers as his authority to Vitranga.) To what a "strange blunder" does Dr. D.'s "eagerness to find his sort of elder in the synagogue" lead him!

Dr. Dabney makes several mistakes in his paragraph relating to the synagogue. 1. *Prelatists* do not go to the Synagogue for their model, but to the Temple and the Theocracy. Low



Church Episcopalians, like Whateley, go to the synagogue to refute high church prelatie claims, and Whateley makes the elders ministers. (See Bernard on the Synagogue, who was his chaplain.) 2. "The three officers and the very names of office were," not as Dr. D. says, "angel, presbyter and deacon," but as Dr. Miller quotes (p. 44,) "the angel of the church and the Bishop belonged to the ministers in the Synagogue." There was also a bench of elders rightly and by imposition of hands (given as Maimonides affirms only to Teachers, that is Doctors or ministers;) and then Deacons. 3. Dr. D. affirms that "all this Presbyterial organization was *God's own ordinance* for the Old Testament church." Now by which of his rules for divine right is this claim established? Dr. Miller more wisely admits that "there is so much uncertainty" about "the institution of the synagogue service that the discussion will not be attempted." (p. 33.)

We protest against the reiterated dishonor cast on Deacons by calling them "waiting men." Surely calling elders laymen, among whom are the noblest professions of the land, is immeasurably less liable to disparaging comparison than by degrading deacons, who were men full of the Holy Ghost and power, into "waiting men."

Dr. Dabney tells it in Gath, and proclaims it to the Philistines, that no where is there any account whatever given of the introduction of the ruling elder. And therefore he must take hold of the skirt of the minister and borrow his name, and constitute a one order-partnership to govern the church by their joint and several authority. The fact on this theory is inexplicable, and the creation of two classes of officers—Dr. Miller calls them offices or orders without mixture—for one or other of which there is no appropriate name, qualifications or duties laid down in the word of God, is assuredly a violation of divine right. The argument in the case as put by Baxter still holds good. "As for them," he says, "who say Paul includeth under the same names Bishops and Presbyters, I answer, Paul useth not only the same name but the same description, and so the order or office also must be the same." But on our theory the elder, as "properly the representative of the people," is inherent in the universal priesthood of Christ's people, and we have given an example of this intuitively developed right of delegated representation in the representatives who sat in the Council or Synod of Jerusalem, and who are carefully distinguished from the presbyters and apostles as *THE BRETHREN*. Our theory therefore points out the original representative of the people, chosen by them to assist the ministers in the government and discipline of the church, while by each of Dr. D.'s

rules for establishing a divine right, either the ruling elder or the minister is excluded by his theory.

But where, it is asked, is the ruling elder when only bishops and deacons are named as in Phil. 1: 1? We answer, by asking where are ministers? if, as this theory teaches, the bishops were elders? Where were ministers and deacons when only elders were ordained in every city and church? And if the eldership was instituted first and before ministers, and if elders are meant by bishops and presbyters, then the astounding fact is true that "nowhere is any account of THEIR introduction given," a conclusion which needs only to be stated to be refuted. And yet to this complexion it must come at last. A negative will not create an office by divine right. A difficulty will not affect an established fact.

The meaning and usage of the terms bishop and presbyter proves, says Dr. D. as his second argument, "that they must apply to the ruling elder *at least* as strictly as they do to the preacher." In other words, the original presbyters were ruling elders, and it is only as ruling elders ministers are even in a *generic* sense presbyters. This is the affirmative proposition as given by Dr. Thornwell and Dr. Adger. And so adds Dr. D., "The preacher of the Christian church only becomes a presbyter and a bishop by becoming a ruling elder. He is a presbyter not only because he preaches but because he rules."

Now to all the dogmatic confidence with which this is affirmed and reiterated, we reply, 1. That we have just now shewn "the preposterous" conclusion to which it leads; 2. After all it is only saying that the preacher becomes a bishop and presbyter when he becomes a preacher, because by becoming a minister he becomes a ruler and has the sceptre and the keys put into his hand. This Dr. Miller holds unequivocally and teaches constantly. To say otherwise he makes to be Independency. (Rul. Eld. p. 66.) Ministers he makes to be rulers *ex-officio*. (Do. p. 69, 68, 65, 54, 194, &c.) Ruling Elders and ministers Dr. M. makes to be distinct in offices and in functions. (See Do. p. 56, 281; 300, 243, 206, 171, 137, 125, 138.) Dr. Miller makes the ministerial office superior as well as distinct, and the ruling elder inferior. (See Do. p. 55, 69, 137, 170, and Christ. Min. p. 74, &c.) Dr. Miller makes bishop and presbyter generically include both ministers and ruling elders but "singularly" and emphatically to mean the minister. (See p. 45, 49 and Chr. Min.) This theory, therefore, right or wrong, is not that of Dr. Miller.

But 3. The elders of the Old Testament were civil rulers, laymen, princes, heads of tribes, representatives of the people—heathen as well as Jewish, and were not therefore the clerical ruling elders, the bishops and pastors and shepherds, apt to

teach and watching for souls, &c., of this theory. 4. The presbyters of the Synagogue were, according to Vitringa, all ordained as preachers, and this Dr. Miller admits. They were all by office capable of, and on occasion, were required to preach. (See Do. Rul. Eld. p. 37 et al.) They certainly therefore were not ruling elders, who are officially *only* rulers and not preachers at all. 5. The theory of Neander here baldly propounded, is contrary to all facts. The ministry was in existence and in use from the beginning of our Saviour's ministry, and was not a secondary after thought. God did not cause the introduction "*first of the ruling elder*, who alone was at first needed." Of its *introduction* Dr. D. has already admitted "we have no account." But Christ said, "Go preach," to the twelve, to the seventy, to the assembled church on Galilee, to Paul, and in his first ascension gift and commission. 6. Finally among the parts belonging unto the ministerial office "he hath also a ruling power over the flock." (Form of Gov. of the Westminster Divines and of the Ch. of Scotland ch. 3. See also Dr. Miller on Ruling Eld. p. 24, 25, 27 and 52.)

The theory we attributed to Neander, not as "an invention," but as an opinion developed by him as a representative man, was not the generic or appellative use of the terms bishop and presbyter, so that in this "large sense" they might be applied to ruling elders as laymen, chosen from and by the people as their delegated representatives. Such a meaning we found made by Calvin, Knox, the Books of Discipline, by Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, Guthrie, &c., adopted by Dr. Miller, and as an established nomenclature and cordially sanctioned by ourselves. But to Neander we are indebted for the very theory adopted by Dr. Dabney, Dr. Adger, &c., viz, that these terms refer *primarily* and *exclusively* to ruling elders; that these were the first and for an indefinite time, the only officers in the churches; that there was then no office of the ministry nor any distinct ministers; that those who received gifts for public speaking spoke and became preachers, and if not presbyters already, were introduced, says Dr. D., into the church session.

Now, all *this* part of the theory Dr. Miller, as we have seen, did not adopt but rejected, and has in every particular studiously eschewed; and this theory we pronounce novel, inconsistent with scriptural facts, contrary to all Presbyterian standards and standard Presbyterian writers, revolutionary and destructive to "the sacred office" of the ministry and to the conservative character of Presbyterianism. It is all theory, and hypothesis. It is in violent conflict with the fact that an order of ministers distinct from rulers existed under the Old Testament economy from the time of Enoch and Noah; in the Jewish church; in the Synagogue; under our Lord's personal

ministry; and as Dr. Miller says, "AS SOON as we *begin* to read of the Apostles organizing churches." It is in open contrast to God's plan of saving them that are lost, of imparting faith, of preserving and propagating the church.

We did not therefore say that Dr. Miller "borrowed" or believed this theory of Neander. We did say that Dr. M. "accepted" Neander's theory so far as "one order of presbyters with two classes went." "Neander suggested the interpretation which gives to the word an appellative sense, and this theory was ably presented by Dr. Miller." All this Dr. M. might do and yet have held and published *substantially* the same views twenty years before, because the "large" sense of presbyter was in use. But as we also said, while Dr. M. accepted this part of Neander's theory, "nevertheless his form of the theory differs *essentially* from his followers, and is an *a priori* protest against it." This protest we delineated in several particulars. (Bib. Repert. p 205.) "No authority," we *added*, "can be pleaded for any one feature of the theory of the eldership now put forth under great names with confident boldness, from Dr. Miller." (Do. p. 224 and July No.)

The remainder of Dr. D.'s second article is in reply to our argument that logical necessity compelled many to find only one order of presbyter, and that the fundamental nature of the ministry would compel the Church of God to limit the term to it.

1. To this Dr. D. replies, first, by limiting the office of the ministry to preaching alone, whereas it comprehends preaching, discipling, teaching, ruling and whatever pertains to the conversion of men, the organization of churches, the appointment of officers, the administration of ordinances and the discipline of the church. "Go ye," &c.

2. His second reply is based on the assumption that presbyter means essentially a *ruler*, and if applied to ministers they would still be as presbyters *only rulers*. But presbyter does not essentially refer to rule, but to honor, dignity, reverence, and as applied to ministers it is indicative of the fact stated by our standards and repeatedly by Dr. Miller in substance—the ministry is declared to be the first office in the church both for dignity and usefulness.

3. He argues that ruling may be the essential meaning of presbyter and the essential function of presbyters, and yet the preaching presbyter be more honorable than the ruling presbyter, though called by a lower name than preacher, just as a general is called a soldier, though a soldier is in essence a fighting man, and just as various kinds of judges are called judges, though some are only justices of the peace.



But really we can see in all this nothing relevant to the question whether the ruling elder is the presbyter of scripture, nor any approach "to the dignity of an argument." For to make an analogy; the general should be called the "fighting man," which is the essence of a common soldier, and the judges should be called justices of the peace. In these cases that title is applied to ALL which indicates what is *common to all*. But if presbyter means ONLY A RULER and DOES NOT, as Dr. Thornwell affirms, MEAN MINISTER OR PREACHER, then it cannot with propriety apply to one who is not and never has been a ruling elder, and has only the function of preaching. If presbyter means ONLY a ruler, then only rulers are presbyters, and preachers who are not, as this theory teaches, rulers, are not presbyters. If, on the other hand, presbyter means properly and positively one who is officially BOTH a ruler and preacher, then it cannot in the same sense mean one who is ONLY a ruler and NOT a preacher.

T. S.

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#### NO. III.

*What we do and do not believe—Men of straw easily knocked down and stop thief will catch an honest man—His arguments for ruling elders being presbyters and bishops reviewed—Plurality of presbyters—The presbyters at Miletus—Meaning of the word church—Dr. D.'s disagreement with Dr. Killen, Dr. Alexander and Dr. Mason—Dr. Wardlaw and Davidson and Cramer—This theory goes beyond Neander and contradicts Dr. Miller—Fourth argument from Scripture passages—Irrelevant and inconclusive to the only question on hand,—I Tim. 5: 7, and Phil. 1: 1, and I Pet. 5: 1-7.*

In taking up the argument of Dr. D., as presented in his third article, we must again protest against his statement of the question at issue between the *Repertory* and its opponents. We do hold the ministry to be the original, originating and seminal order in Christ's Church, without which it could neither begin, continue nor increase; but we do not believe nor have we ever said, "that they *alone* are the essential bond of the church's government." We do believe that in its proper official sense ruling elders are not the *presbyters* and *bishops* of the New Testament and the Fathers, but, that as the Second Book of Discipline in Scotland teaches, they may be so called when the word presbyter is "taken *largely*;" and we believe that as *rulers* their office is co-ordinate with that of ministers as rulers, though distinct from it. We not only do not believe "that they are not entitled to any ordination by laying on of hands;" we have for thirty years adopted Dr. Miller's plan

and have ordained towards a score with the imposition of our own hands and those of the elders. We do not believe, nor have we said, that elders are "*simply* laymen." "In any invidious sense ruling elders," we said (*Rep.* p. 463) "are not laity." We use the term as "relative altogether to office or order, not to *dignity* or *worth* or *rank*." "Ruling elders," we said, "are laymen, that is, as the word literally, and in universal usage means, they are not *clergymen* but distinct from the *clergy*." We spoke of the lay or popular and non-clerical character of ruling elders; and yet "ruling elders are not incumbents of a lay office, nor lay officers in the sense of being originated or authorized by man." Now if, as Dr. Miller teaches, we would not be faithful to Christ if we did not distinguish these two offices; if he gives a formula of titles which does not apply *presbyter* to *ruling elders* but the name of Ruling Elders only which we cordially use; and if every elder in the world knows he is not a minister, that is in common usage a *clergyman*; what are ruling elders, and how are they to be described in relation to ministers except as laymen?

Again, we believe the very opposite of what is affirmed for us, and hold ruling elders in *every* sense essential constituent parts of church courts, which *in no case* may legitimately subsist without them so far as Scripture warrants are concerned.

In all these points and many others we agree with Dr. Miller, and we have shown that Dr. D. and his co-theorists differ from Dr. Miller in everything essential to the ministry and eldership.

To prove that ruling elders are the presbyters and bishops of the New Testament whose qualifications are laid down in 1 Timothy and Titus, &c., Dr. D. adduced as proofs.

1. From the existence of such presbyters in the Synagogue. But when Dr. Miller himself admits "with the learned Vitranga and some others" whose judgment is worthy of the highest respect that the elders (or *presbyters*) of the Synagogue were of one and the same rank or order; that they ALL received ONE AND THE SAME ORDINATION; and were of *course* equally authorized to PREACH, when duty or inclination called them to this part of the public service, *as well as* to rule; (See Rul. Eld. p. 37) will any ruling elder in the world be made to believe that he is, or can, or ought to be such a presbyter?

2. His second proof that ruling elders are the presbyters and bishops of Scripture and the Fathers is that the meaning and usage of the terms show that they must apply to the ruling elder, *at least as* strictly as the preacher. But Dr. Thornwell alleges that "presbyter as a title of office meant a ruler and *nothing more* than a ruler," and that "it is *not applicable* to preachers as ministers of the Word;" and yet we have

seen that in the Synagogue, from which Christian churches, we are told, transferred their titles, the presbyters were *all* ordained as preachers, and according to Dr. Addison Alexander "presbyters AS PRESBYTERS possessed, and EXERCISED the highest powers now belonging to the ministry."

3. His third proof that ruling elders are presbyters and bishops is "because no matter how small the church, we always read of a plurality of them." But in the name of logic and common sense, how does this fact—if true—prove that the presbyters everywhere ordained were ruling elders? Only by just affirming that because the word presbyter was commonly understood and applied to officers "all of whom" were ordained as preachers, and "*exercised*" that office, therefore many of them were not preachers but merely rulers. But the *fact* is not as stated. These presbyters "are not said to have been ordained in every church however small," but "in every city" and "in every church." But in every city there was a plurality of churches such as they then were, and the term church included under one presbyterial term these several churches to each of whom one minister would be assigned. The proof of this point was the great debate between the Presbyterians and the Independents in the Westminster Assembly. Besides, every primitive church was a missionary station from which "the word of God sounded forth." And if because in Phil. 1 only bishops and deacons are mentioned, therefore ruling elders are meant by bishops, (though Dr. Miller thinks that pastors of churches were "singularly," that is emphatically called bishops)—then when it is only said "they ordained presbyters in every city and church," and no mention is made of preachers, preachers must be meant by presbyters since no city that contained churches could be without preachers.—The argument is as conclusive one way as the other. "In every city" does not mean that a church was established and presbyters ordained in every existing city, but that presbyters were ordained in every city where there was a church or station, "city by city." It is ridiculous, therefore, to argue that because Titus was appointed for the purpose of ordaining elders in every city as God might prepare the way for doing so, that therefore as a matter of fact, he did actually ordain them in each of the hundred cities of Crete. No such conclusion follows and no such fact is recorded. But in every city where the way was opened for ministerial or missionary labor, they ordained ministers. "Some of the churches," it is granted by Dr. D., "*employed many preachers at home.*" Acts 13: 1) This we grant. Now by what other name than presbyters or elders are such ministers described, when all these cities and churches are spoken of? The fact of a plurality—nay *many*—

preachers in one church is admitted, and these were the presbyters—and therefore whenever a plurality of such is spoken of, we must infer that the openings for usefulness required there two or more ministers.

We confess not to have found the place which speaks of Stephen “officially extending the gospel round about,” but if he did so, it was as an Evangelist, and Evangelists are presbyters consecrated to missionary work; and to whom but their ministers did the Apostle refer in 1 Thess. 1: 8, when he said, “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place?” And does Dr. D. really mean that the apostolic ministers were not itinerant and missionary? Mosheim critically expounds the “*labor*” of the presbyter in 1 Tim. 5: 17, as referring to missionary toil and self-denying. And if Dr. D. limits the qualifications of a bishop in 1 Timothy and Titus so as to exclude “any itineracy or mission” and refer only to functions permanent and local, where will he find authority for such work either in Evangelists, ministers or ruling elders, for even they have to travel about?

Dr. D. attaches much importance to the elders who met the apostles at Miletus, all belonging locally to the church at Ephesus, because to make them from the region around is prelatical and “betrays one of our tried bulwarks to the enemy,” and because the word is “church in the singular, and the usage so common among us—as the Presbyterian *church* in North Carolina—is utterly unknown in the New Testament” only.

Now let the text mean what he says, and let it refer only to the ruling elders and pastor, or “mean preachers employed” by the single church at Ephesus, and Paul is still, according to prelaty, a Prelate, for he exercises, they say, prelatic authority, and that too over rulers, here and every where else, just as Timothy and Titus did. But let these presbyters be many ministers from the neighborhood, gathered to take leave of, and receive parting instructions from, their inspired apostle and authoritative teacher, and let us hear Paul—instead of assuming any lordship—addressing them as equals, teaching for all time that bishop and presbyter are synonymous and mean the one and only order of ministers, and then we bid prelates blush and be confounded at their own insolent pretensions.

It is true “the word church is singular,” but it is a common noun, and is, as Presbyterians have ever and every where taught, “used to designate divers single congregations in one church.” This, say the celebrated authors of that standard work, “The Divine Right of Presbyterian Church Government,” “may be plentifully evinced by four instances of churches,” *including Ephesus*. “Touching these, two things are clear in



Scripture. 1st. That every one of them was one church. 2nd. That in every one of these churches there were more congregations than one," and this is the foundation stone of a Presbyterian as opposed to a Congregational church. For it is contended, as in this book, that the many congregations "in Judea," &c., are one church, because of "one joint administration of church government among them," and when Saul "made havoc of the church," the reference is certainly to the whole number of churches throughout Judea. When Peter, (1 Pet. 5: 12) exhorts the presbyters who are among you \* \* \* feed the flock of God. This flock of God, says Dr. Killen, was evidently equivalent to "the church of God and was spread over a large territory," (*Ancient Church*, p. 260.) Now Paul here (Acts 20: 28,) uses both "the flock," and "the church," as synonymous. He speaks also of "ALL the flock," that is *the church or flock* comprised the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, to whom Peter wrote. One of the meanings assigned to the word church by Dr. Mason is "local associations of professing christians whether more or less extensive, as in the salutations to the Epistles." How then could a Master in Israel say that the established use of the word church "to express the associated churches over a whole province," as the Church of Scotland, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, &c., is utterly unknown in the New Testament "and that in all such cases the word is, without variation, used in the plural?"

Dr. D., in company with Congregationalists, says that the term "church" in Acts 20: 28, "can mean nothing but the local church literally resident in Ephesus," "and all the presbyters or bishops called together were elders of it, were local officers with a local charge." Now if Dr. D. will allow Dr. Killen, who is on the wrong side of this question, to decide between us, he says, (*Ancient Church*, pp. 258-259) that the churches of ALL Asia were represented. Paul invited all in the district to repair to him at the place where he now sojourned. The address, says Dr. Killen, conveys the impression that they did not all belong to the metropolis, and the very first sentence suggests such an inference, and the words which follow "intimate that his auditors were not resident in one locality."

Now a Synodical Assembly, such as that of a number of ministers, all co-equal presbyters and bishops receiving in trust the whole power of the Apostle, as a presbyter, with no allusion to any higher officer as his prelatical successor is a nut to crack, which will break the very jaws of prelacy, and neither betrays this "tried bulwark" to Prelacy, as he alleges we do, nor to Congregationalists, as we allege he does.

Dr. Wardlaw and Dr. Davidson admit a plurality of presbyters in every ancient church, "and what then?" Do we not also do the same? They, as Congregationalists, admit just what we would, that is, that there was in the earliest churches a plurality of presbyters, who were all of one order or office, and ALL as in the Synagogue, ordained and entitled to preach. ALL, as Dr. Davidson says, having an equal right to perform the same functions. But what has that to do—even if their testimony were worth anything in the premises,—with proving TWO CLASSES of ONE ORDER, one of which has no such right, and one of which never was ordained to preach? By the way, can any body enable us to answer a query with which we are puzzled—*what is the difference between class and order?*

Dr. D. seems here, and afterwards to admit that his views and the theory they embody, coincide with this Congregational outline, and with the conclusions of the Virginia pastor, who would adopt as the *permanent* polity of the church. what Neander supposed was its first natural and transition order, or as he calls it "the planting and training of the church." Officers were appointed just as circumstances required—all of one order called presbyters—of whom those who had the gift of speaking, spoke. According to Neander, however, the church soon out-grew this planting and settled down into three distinct orders, that is of ministers who are also rulers, associated and joint rulers, and deacons. Cramer, "however, would perpetuate the *first* as alone divinely authorized—that is one order of elders, every one of whom he required to possess some gift, both for ruling *and teaching*. *Every one* would be a *teaching elder*, and authorized to perform *all* the duties of the ministry," and to this complexion it must come at last. Away then with the indefinite, indefinable distinction of *one* order with two classes, having *essentially different* and untransferable functions. Let us have it, if it is the true and the good, but let it not be pretended that it is the theory of Dr. Miller, of our Standards, or of any standard Presbyterian writer, beyond these recent theorists. Not even Neander will sustain it, while Dr. Miller would cry "out upon it."

The alleged practical impossibility and absurdity of a plurality of ministers "in every city," or as it is otherwise expressed "in every church," exists only in supposing "every church" a congregation—every congregation small, and every one settled and long established, and having no relation to a missionary field around it. But there is no difficulty at Shanghai, in China. Nay in every city in our land, and in the church in every city, according to its size, the number of preaching presbyters is numerous.

4. The fourth proof that ruling elders are "the officially ordained presbyters of Scripture" is founded on passages of Scripture.

1. That in Rom. 12: 6-8, is entirely irrelevant, since it speaks only of "him that ruleth," and in no way either calls him or makes him a "*presbyter*." This passage we both approve and appropriate.

2. 1 Cor. 12: 28, where "helps and governments" are spoken of. This also we approve and appropriate, but it does not in any conceivable way make those it speaks of "the ordained presbyters of Scripture," but "governors," the very title given to ruling elders, by Calvin, Knox, the Church of Scotland in her Form of Government, now, and from the beginning, and by the Westminster Assembly, and yet even this proof for officers, similar to ruling elders, Dr. Thornwell repudiates, for "it is idle" says he, "to tell us Paul speaks of *governments* and using the abstract for the concrete, means governors themselves." It is nevertheless given as a proof text in our Standards.

3. The above exhausts his proofs from Scripture, of what he asks "the reader to *bear in mind* is THE QUESTION now in hand" — "not simply whether it is Scriptural to have ruling elders, BUT whether these ruling elders are among the *official ordained presbyters*." Now we ask our readers whether they have the remotest bearing on THIS point, which he, himself, makes THE question in hand. His third proof is a complete begging of the whole question, and a self-contradiction. His argument is, "there are no names of permanent officers, except three, preacher or angel, presbyter and deacon. The ruling elder, therefore must be identified with one of the three." But if so why not with deacon or angel, seeing no man can tell certainly what angel does mean? Dr. Killen denies its reference to ministers. Preachers also as a title for ministers, is not found in our Standards' list of names for ministers, but PRESBYTER IS, and it is not given to ruling elders by them, nor by those of the Church of Scotland, as contained in their Confession of Faith; and for our life we cannot see why the titles of governors and rulers are not as good and permanent and pleasant as presbyters, and as suitable for ruling elders.

4. As to 1 Timothy 5: 17, we would refer our readers to our discussion of it in the *Repertory* for Oct., p. 726. It must first be proved that presbyter means ruling elder, that is one who rules but does not preach, before the text can be applied to them at all. 2. The term translated "*rule well*" is employed innumerable times by Justin Martyr, one of the earliest and best Fathers, and by other early Fathers, to denote the ministers. 3. The presbyters that rule well were to be *liberally*

supported and of course be wholly devoted to their work. 4. If by presbyters that "rule well" are meant rulers who do not preach, it would teach just what Papists and Prelatists want—an order of prelatic bishops. 5. The text if explained as Dr. D. requires, divides presbyters into two classes, one to rule *only* and one to preach *only*, which is *not* what he and this theory require nor what as a church we have. 6. This text is not given to prove the office of ruling elder in the form of government of the Church of Scotland, and it was rejected by the Westminster Assembly which prepared our Confession. 7. The Provincial Synod of London in 1650 say, "They, the *ministers* are called *such as rule well*." 8. The term rendered *labor*, in connection with *especially*, shows that a difference in kind and degree of *work* and not in *office* is meant.

5. As to 1 Peter 5: 1-6 we have already spoken. The presbyters here were to act as bishops, not for the sake of their salaries, but of a ready mind, and they were as Dr. Killen concludes ministers. "The exhortation of v. 5 is," he says, "obviously addressed to ministers and can be acted upon only by ministers," (p. 260.)

6. In Phil. 1: 1, only bishops and deacons are mentioned, and ruling elders must, therefore, it is said, be included under bishops. But, if, as this theory teaches, bishops mean primarily ruling elders, then we ask where are ministers, and if as Dr. Miller concludes, the pastors of churches were singularly called bishops, then only such could here be meant. Ruling elders are not in the records at all, and to say they must be is to be wise above what is written, and to add to God's word and to the truth of history. Ruling elders may not have been appointed in that church. It is just as easy to suppose a church in an imperfect state of development as to ruling elders, as in regard to ministers, and just as, for a time, there were no deacons, and according to this theory, no regular and fixed ministry, so may churches, for a time, have appointed rulers and governors and brethren, as occasion required, until the office became fixed and permanent and general. There is no proof given that *ruling elders* were at first and invariably set apart and permanently invested with office. Their introduction may have been gradual and informal; or this one church may have been like some now, without a ruling elder or suitable persons for such.

Be this as it may, so long as we have mention of RULERS and GOVERNORS and THE BRETHREN, as distinct from apostles and presbyters, we cannot in this case of Philippi make them gratuitously one and the same as bishops, and then by this gratuitous assumption prove *what no passage alleged does prove*,



namely, the only question now in hand, not whether there are ruling elders, but whether "these ruling elders are the official ordained presbyters of Scripture." T. S.

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NO. IV.

*Dr. Dabney's Theory—Consequences from it—Responsibility and guilt of Dr. Miller, and our Standards, and our General Assembly—Dr. D's proofs of his No. 5 reviewed—His Elders not those of the Synagogue—Nor etymologically—Nor amongst the plurality of Presbyters—Not found in his proof-texts which we receive—His reductio ad absurdum an assumption against previous proof, and against our Standards, and those of every other Presbyterian Church—Proof of this from Drs. Hoge and Rice and our Assembly—Dr. D's difficulty to find names for Ministers—Dr. D's Ruling Elder Bishops deprived of their title—The incredible fact, its fatal bearing on his Theory—Protest against his suspicions and charge of duplicity—Remarkable facts from Gillespie and Westminster Assembly—Remarkable proof from our own Standards—Their use of 1 Tim. 5: 17—Dr. D's dilemma—Caught in it—His efforts to escape—Divine right for Boards, &c.*

Dr. Dabney's fourth article contains his alleged proofs of what he very justly asks his readers to bear in mind is the *only* question in controversy, viz, are ruling elders the ordained presbyters of scripture and of the early christian writers? If they are then these conclusions follow: 1. There are no such ruling elders now in any church in the world. 2. None such have been found in any church since the reformation. 3. Nor any from the reformation up till the apostolic times who, while ordained as the scripture presbyters, it is admitted were, that is as preachers and rulers, nevertheless ruled *only*, except it be Romish prelates. 4. No recognition nor provision is made for such officers in the standards of any Presbyterian church in the world. 5. Our own Standards know nothing of ruling elders who are ordained as bishops and presbyters and clergymen, and fill therefore the pastoral office, perform pastoral duties, and are clothed with pastoral dignity and authority. 6. Our Standards positively teach that "the person who fills the pastoral office (that is ministers) beside having the name of bishop, pastor, minister, angel, ambassador and steward, is also called presbyter," and that "the representatives of the people" "are commonly called ruling elders" and not presbyters. 7. Our Standards so far from teaching that ruling elders are to be ordained as presbyters by imposition of the hands of presby-

tery, prescribe no imposition of hands even of the session in their ordination. 8. Ruling elders were never before Dr. Miller's time ordained with imposition of hands in our own church nor in the Scotch, nor under the constitutional forms of any Presbyterian church; John Alasco was not a Presbyterian, and his church was a single congregation, and he a kind of bishop over different sorts of churches and a helper in shaping the forms and order of the Church of England. 9. If, therefore, ruling elders by divine right are and ought to be, the ordained presbyters of scripture, then the church has been without them all this period, and now for the first time ruling elders and not ministers are discovered to be the presbyters and pastors and bishops of the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers.

How fearful is our responsibility and guilt? How wicked was it in Dr. Miller to teach that *ministers* and *not elders* are pastors, that their office is superior to the eldership, and that the office of the elder is inferior in dignity and usefulness and cannot unite in imposing hands in the ordination of ministers. Nay our very standards are profane and unscriptural in calling the minister and not the elder presbyter, and the ministerial office the highest in the church both for dignity and usefulness, and for calling it, and it alone, in so many places "the sacred office," "the holy office" of the ministry.

Now that our church, and Dr. Miller, and our General Assembly, and Dr. Hodge, not to name the *Repertory*, are guilty of "the deep damnation of this taking off," Dr. Dabney alleges in proof, 1. That ruling elders who do not *preach* are derived from the presbyters in the Synagogue, "ALL of whom *were* ordained to preach." 2. That by etymology and use the term is a name of *ruling* office, and yet etymologically it is a term of dignity, gravity and honor rather than of office, and in the Synagogue was *used* for those "ALL of whom were ordained to preach." 3. He says "every church had several elders all of whom *could not* have been preachers." Reader, there is a *proof* for you. "They could not," that is it is absurd and contradictory to say they were. And yet he admits that in some cases many such *were required*; Dr. Miller makes all the presbyters at Miletus and all the prophets and teachers at Antioch, and the bishops at Philippi "pastors of single congregations," and that "in apostolic times it was customary to have a plurality of these bishops in a single city," and that bishop as pastor refers to ministers he makes plain by saying "in short the title of bishop as applied to *ministers* of the gospel occurs only *four* times: in three of these cases there is complete proof that it is given to those styled presbyters and in the fourth case there is a strong presumption," &c., (Christ. Min. p. 57, 58, 55, &c.)

4. His proof texts are very good texts, but what they prove is just what he did not quote them to prove, and we teach they do prove, that is, that ruling elders were "rulers" and "governors" but not *presbyters*. 5. And now he adds as a conclusive and *reductio ad absurdum* proof that "unless we find the ruling elder in the proper bishop or presbyter of the New Testament, we have no sufficient warrant whatever for the office." Now what is this but the child's folly, who because he cannot have his food exactly in his own way, will not have it at all, and then complains to his mamma that his nurse will not give him anything to eat. So, Dr. D. would have you, kind readers, believe that because we object to his converting "the ordained bishops and presbyters and pastors of the New Testament into ruling elders," therefore we do not believe "they have any Scripture warrant at all." We have said that we find them in the *rulers* and *governors* and the *brethren* of St. Paul and St. Luke, but all this is nothing unless we admit that they are ordained pastors and bishops and presbyters. Now we ask, 1. Does Dr. D. think that the Westminster Confession of Faith and Form of Government on which our Church is built "gives any Scriptural warrant at all for the elder's office?" Does he think the Church of Scotland, the Free Church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and in Canada, the Reformed Church or Covenanters, the Seceders, &c., do not believe that the Elder's office has any Scripture warrant at all? What then do they—what did our fathers and martyred fore-fathers believe? Did they—do these—do any of them believe that ruling elders are the ordained bishops and presbyters and pastors of scripture? They do not! they never did since they gave record to their faith. Do they believe that ruling elders are the presbyters in 1 Tim. 5: 17 and the bishops whose qualifications are given in 1 Tim. 3 and in Titus 1? They do not. They did more—they *rejected* it. "That place was *denied* to them says Gillespie." (Notes on the Wesm. Ass., of which he was a prominent member, p. 64.) They did more. At Gillespie's suggestion, the Assembly put 1 Tim. 5: 17, as a proof-text to the clause in the Form of Government that ministers "whose office it is to labor in word and doctrine, do moderate (i. e. act as *proestos*, the word translated *rule*) in their proceedings." (See any Scotch or Irish Confes. of Faith!) They did still more. They put 1 Tim. 5: 17 with Acts 20: 17, 28, 1 Thess. 5: 12, Heb. 13: 7 and 17, (the very passages Dr. D. & Co., apply to ruling elders) to prove the doctrine that the minister "hath also a ruling power over the congregation." (See Conf. of Faith as above.) The Provincial Synod of London and not private authors therefore, say in their work on the Ministry, published at the time of the

Assembly, that ministers are called *the presbyters that rule well*.

Now it is utterly vain and beside the question to tell us what Dr. King or Dr. Davidson (a renegade Presbyterian who became first Congregational and then a German Latitudinarian) believed. What, we want to know, have our Reformers and the Standards of our mother churches deduced from Scripture on the subject?

But do we admit that *our own* Standards teach differently? We do not. How could they, seeing as is uncontrovertible, that these very Westminster Standards were our own in this country until a modification was made in the revision of the constitution in 1788, and then their very nomenclature was the basis of our own. Our own Standards therefore assign the term *presbyter exclusively* to *ministers*, to whom also it appropriates the titles of bishop and pastor. Our General Assembly also, after discussing this theory of Dr. Dabney & Co. for three years, decided that ruling elders are NOT the ordained Presbyters and Bishops and Pastors of Scripture, and that this theory "tends to subvert the office of ruling elder by confounding it with that of minister of the word." This was in 1844 and the answer to the theorists was signed by such Virginia fathers as James Hoge and B. H. Rice, with others.

And does not the reader observe that Dr. D. by giving these titles of bishop, presbyter and pastor to ruling elders, is driven to the necessity of declaring "that in the apostolic church there were but *three* names of permanent church officers," and that the minister was called "the preacher," a title only used three times in the New Testament, and *angel* which, if applied to them at all, is only so in Rev. 2: 3. Besides "preachers or angels" Dr. D. gives "presbyters and deacons." He should have candidly said, "presbyters who are also bishops and pastors." But this would not do under the present argument which, with any candid inquirer, must be regarded as suicidal, destructive and a complete exposure of the weakness of the theory. Until the close of the New Testament and apostolic era "there were BUT" the above "names of permanent church officers." Of these, ruling elders were called bishops, presbyters and pastors. So say these theorists, but as we have seen without a particle of proof and in opposition to the fact that those presbyters were, as we have shewn, ALL ordained preachers, and to the fact that scripture calls them, as all Presbyterian Standards declare they do, by other titles. But it *must* be so, and this theory declares it is so.

How is it then, from the time of the Apostles till the time of the Reformers, or we may say until this theory appeared? The usage claimed for scripture was, we are told, entirely changed,



and yet no account preserved relating to it. "The reader must understand that in the uninspired writings the scriptural language was speedily corrupted by depriving the bench of elders of their proper name *episcopoi*, bishops; and restricting it to the presiding pastor and teacher." \* \* \* \* \* "So that when we use the word bishop in the singular number in stating the usages of these primitive christians, we shall never be understood as meaning by it the minister of the congregation."

Here there is an admitted fact. Another fact must be added to it, viz, that just as soon as bishops were made a superior order of ministers, deacons were made an order of ministers also, and presbyters an order of ministers inferior to bishops and superior to deacons.

Now observe well what is implied in this historical fact. Ruling elders according to Dr. D. were the first officers appointed in the church, and were the bishops and presbyters. Afterwards preaching as a gift or function was added to some of these and constituted a class called "preacher and angel." Now, how the ministry should come to be made the first and highest order; how the rulers should be made subordinate, how the minister who *as such* could not, as this theory says, rule, should become chief ruler, and presbyters come to do nothing but under his command; how ministers could come to be exclusively called bishops and pastors; how if the term presbyter means essentially a ruler, and implies dignity and honor, and "cannot be applied to the minister as such at all," should now be given to the prelatie or ruling order; and how bishop, which refers to work and labor, should be chosen in place of presbyter; how these presbyters could be like our ruling elders and yet all be ordained and expected to preach as the bishop required them, as Dr. Miller admits; how as he also admits presbyters became exclusively ministers and "now preaching elders were chiefly banished from the church." (Rul. Eld. p. 104 and 102;) how all this could take place and yet no record of it be found is beyond credibility. We can easily understand how, among ministers originally equal and called alike presbyters and bishops, the presiding moderator might become fixed and permanent and superior in rank and power, and of this change we have many evidences and the distinct testimonies of Tertullian, Jerome and Hilary, but they also teach that the presbyters were just what the bishops were in their days, that is, ministers.

It is also to be noted that the plurality of these presbyters was just as great, nay increasingly greater, after "*now preaching presbyters* were excluded," and therefore the argument drawn from plurality against all being ministers has confessedly no force. And if, as Dr. D. insists, *unless* ruling elders *must*

be found in these presbyters of scripture and the Fathers. "we can find no scripture warrant for them at all," and "they have no business in our church organization at all," surely he neither makes proof out of disproof nor establishes a conclusion where all the facts are against it. And if, as all the world beyond the pale of our denomination, with insignificant exceptions, and many of the ablest and most profound scholars within it, identify these presbyters of scripture and the Fathers with ministers, "verily," to use his own charitable words, "the suspicion does not seem very harsh that this is a category to which he would not be very loath to reduce them." For surely no man can be brought to believe that ruling elders who DO NOT and OUGHT NOT, as such, to preach, are the same as those presbyters who in the Synagogue and in all ages of the church, were ordained so as to be authorized to preach, and in practice did preach, whenever ordered to do so. And we protest, 1. against Dr. D's rejection as adequate proof of a divine warrant for ruling elders, of the *only passages* given in proof by the Standards of the great proportion of Presbyterian churches throughout the world, and 2. against his most unjustifiable suspicions thrown out broad cast, not once nor twice only, of the faith and honesty of his opponents, and who ask for facts and not fancies, and for the plain teaching of scripture and not forced and violent conjectures.

In the Standards of the Scotch and all Presbyterian churches derived from her, it is taught that in a single congregation there OUGHT to be one at the least to labor in word and doctrine AND TO RULE. It is also REQUISITE that "there should be others to join in government," (proved by 1 Cor. 12: 28). Now Gillespie tells us that these clauses were adopted *without a dissenting voice*, and yet he also informs us that the language was "contrived so that the first part OUGHT to be, might hold forth an INSTITUTION, the other part, REQUISITE, might hold forth a *prudential conveniency* for ruling elders; for Mr. Seaman (who with Mr. Young presented and argued it,) holds there is a *jus divinum* for ruling elders, but not *jus divinum*, (as in the case of the Church at Phillippi perhaps), that there should be ruling elders in every congregation." (Notes p. 58.)

What right then had Dr. D. to go beyond, nay to go contrary to the Standards of our own Church, of our mother Church of Scotland and Ireland, of that Westminster Assembly which gave to us our Confession and Catechisms and Directory, and dogmatically teach, and by divine right and authority demand acceptance of his inferences, as the very words of God himself? What right has he or any other man, or any set of men, to affirm, and to require others to affirm, that ruling elders are anything than what our Standards define them to be, and

that ministers are not the presbyters which they declare and define them to be? What right have they to teach, as of divine right that ruling elders are presbyters, and ministers not presbyters? What right have they to say that ministers are not rulers, when our standards say, "as it is his duty to be grave and prudent and an example to the flock and to GOVERN WELL, (the very terms of 1 Tim. 5: 17, RULE WELL) the house or kingdom of Christ, he, the minister, is termed PRESBYTER or elder," which is proved by 1 Peter 5: 1, a text which in spite of this is given *by them* to ruling elders, and by Tit. 1: 5 and again by 1 Tim. 5: 1, 17-19? What right have they to affirm and teach as of divine authority that ruling elders are pastors and are made such by the Holy Ghost, and by Him put into the pastoral office, and that in the very face of our Standards, which apply both to ministers and exclusively to ministers; and *again* use 1 Tim. 5: 17—and *that part of it too which is given by these theorists to ruling elders* to prove that "the pastoral office is the first in the church," &c. And what right have they to impugn the honesty and the Presbyterianism of those who affirm all these affirmations of our Standards, of our General Assembly, and of all other Presbyterian churches? We repudiate all such right. We will not be brought into bondage of any man; and when our elders understand the nature of the yoke into which they are asked to put their consciences, and remember that privilege and duty, rights and responsibilities, are correspondent, they will take heed how they are brought under the vow and woe of a pastor, a bishop and a presbyter.

Dr. D. prepares a dilemma and is himself taken fast hold in it; for if no such ruling elders as he requires existed, as we have seen, in the Synagogue, nor in the New Testament, nor in the christian church until this present hour, then he destroys the eldership, for he says he *will* have *these* or *none*. But on our theory, ruling elders are found in the *rulers*, in the *governments*, in the *brethren* of scripture, and throughout history in many analogous officers. Blondel, and Boyce after him, show that while ruling elders cannot be the presbyters of the primitive church, who were ordained to preach, baptize, &c., they may be analogous to the seniors of the people, questmen, sidesmen, assistants, aldermen, ancients, vestrymen, representatives, commissioners, governors, &c., and thus have a historical succession preserved.

The peculiar view of the eldership Dr. D. & Co. insist on being made of divine right and forced upon Scripture, leads "to the subversion of the office of ruling elders," as our General Assembly in 1844 said, "by confounding it with that of the minister of the word." This it does by ascribing to it the same names, qualifications, order, office and functions. For if,

to use the argument of Dr. Miller, (Christian Min. p. 61,) the ministry has been constituted a distinct office from the eldership, we would confidently expect to find a different commission, different qualifications prescribed and different sphere of duty assigned. But on the contrary, according to this theory, the inspired writers give to both the same names, the same description of their character, and enjoin upon them the same duties.

Dr. D. goes far to show that the ruling elder does require all the QUALIFICATIONS that a minister does; that "his function is *as purely* a teaching function as that of the preacher," that "preaching, so far from being nearly all of religious teaching, is less than half;" "and therefore the ruling elder should be *apt to teach*, though he is never to mount the pulpit." But why so, we cannot imagine. For Dr. D. goes on to tell us that we should have found in any ancient city, "that the *sole* difference of qualification we would need to seek in the preacher above the elder would be the gift of fluent and perspicuous public speech, as to all else the same \* \* \* which would suffice for the elder would suffice for the preacher;" and as Dr. Miller admits that the presbyters of the Synagogue and Church were all ordained to preach when necessary, why should they be debarred from the pulpit or from administering baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Dr. D. has found out a divine right which allows the church *now* to create a vast and vital difference between the elders of the primitive and of the present age. Originally their ordination was the same and their qualifications the same, and their right to preach and mount the pulpit the same, provided theirs was a gift of fluent speech. Originally they ordained by imposition of their hands, even ministers, as in the case of Antioch, (Acts 15, and Dr. Miller, Christian Ministry.) They were also pastors and teachers, *apt*, that is adapted and qualified to teach, and were "nearly half" preachers.

But *now* ministers must submit to a systematic plan of special education, and must pass through a course of obligatory trial—and receive a different ordination. We must have seminaries, and professors, and boards—libraries, and buildings and endowments, all the arrangements of a long and thorough professional education.

And why? because in the beginning the scriptures were vernacular and could be at once understood and explained. Nothing however could be more gratuitous as an assertion, and more baseless as a reason. To whom, and how long was the Syriac Greek of the New Testament and the Hebrew and Chaldaic of the Old, vernacular and easy of explanation? The very reverse of his statement is true. Received and authorized ver-



nacular translations are *now* in the hands of all well educated gentlemen, so that with fluency of speech they could at once explain and enforce the Scriptures.

Let no man say "it is impossible for the church *now*" to carry out what by divine right Christ instituted and ordained, or that "the great change of circumstances *compels* us to modify" and change what Christ and His apostles left permanently and definitely arranged. Surely if ruling elders are the first officers appointed in the churches, and are the ordained presbyters, pastors and bishops of scripture, man cannot so change their office as to make a difference in ordination, in qualifications, in education, in aptness to teach and to reprove and convince gainsayers, &c. No, elders must *be* and *do* ALL that the scripture presbyters were and did, and the very facts admitted are a palpable proof that this theory is not that of Scripture. And in the name of consistency, let not those who allow "new circumstances to *demand*" that divine offices, functions, qualifications, ordination, liberty of action "shall be modified according to the whole system," talk any longer about the necessity of a divine specific warrant even for the mode and means by which divinely imposed duty may be best carried out in other matters as in ministerial education.

T. S.

#### NO. V.

*Dr. Dabney's theory novel—The ruling elder not even called presbyter in our own standards nor in those of any other Presbyterian church—Nor do they allow ruling elders to be the bishops and pastors of scripture—How Dr. Dabney attempts to get over this admitted fact as to other churches and the Reformers—John A. Lasco and the Bohemian brethren compared with the French, Dutch, Scotch, Genevan and other churches—The admitted facts are suicidal and destructive to this theory—Dr. D. does not distinguish between divine right of the eldership and of every thing connected with it, such as mode of election and tenure of office—Direct collision of him and Dr. Adger with Dr. Miller—Our book and its theory not repudiated at Princeton—Ourselves suspected by both these charitable D. D's of insincerity and double dealing—The tables turned—"Very funny"—The elder's Shorter Catechism—Conclusion of the whole matter by the application of the compromise of the Constitution—agreed.*

This article of Dr. Dabney's is devoted to the review of some of our historical statements and corollaries from them. We affirm that the ruling elder was not in its strict official meaning either *called* or regarded as presbyter, by our fathers and the

founders of our church. This theory makes him to be the ordained presbyter, bishop, overseer and pastor of the New Testament and of the Primitive churches; and we maintain that this theory is novel, an innovation and revolutionary in its character. In a "large" appellative sense, the reformers called him sometimes *elder*, but not till long after, was he called *ruling elder*. Other and various names were employed and were in use even in this country until the revision of our standards introduced into general use the present title of ruling elder, reserving for the minister *alone* the title of *Presbyter*. Even now in the Form of Government of the churches in Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere, ruling elders are spoken of under the title of "other church governors," "commonly called elders," and we know that in the Westminster Assembly's book, the title of *elder* and of *ruling elder* was discussed and rejected, because it seemed to confound it with the ministry from which it *has* ever, and everywhere, been carefully distinguished. They refused therefore to employ I Tim. 5: 17, "The elders or Presbyters that rule well"—to prove the office, and appropriated it more than once to prove that the minister was essentially a ruler as well as a preacher, and that he "ought to *preside* in church courts,"—to be *proestos*, the word used in I Tim. 5: 17. Our own book also uses this text, I Tim. 5: 17, to prove that the minister had the title Presbyter given to him *because* "he governs well," or as it might be, "rules well." It also uses it in connection with the ruling elder but only as we believe—and as the application just quoted proves—to show on what ground Reformed churches "commonly called them *ruling elders*," namely because in a "large" appellative sense of the term, they were supposed by some to be meant by "those that rule well," and might, as others thought, properly receive the designation of Ruling Elders.

The theory of Professor Dabney is in direct opposition to our Form of Government, since it makes the ruling elder properly and officially the ordained Presbyter, Bishop and Pastor, *EVERY one of which titles* our book limits *exclusively* to ministers. His theory is, therefore, he must admit to be a novelty.

Dr. D. must admit this, for this is what must be understood by his not being at all concerned to discuss the question that Calvin and the Reformed Divines generally and the Westminster Assembly and the first and second (and also the present) Scotch Books of Government are against him. Now Dr. D. knows very well that christianity is a historical religion based on facts and testimonies and a transmitted ministry, and other institutions; and that this kind of evidence is vital, and the want of it damning to any alleged doctrine or practice, as for instance the Sabbath, infant baptism and church membership,

prelatical assumptions, &c. And if our doctrine of the Ruling Eldership is a corruption and Dr. D's is the original, then it follows that for sixteen hundred years the church has been without an office which was instituted by Christ as of Divine right and necessary, and yet *not a title can be found relating to the matter*. Now as Dr. Miller says about baptism of infants, we ask, "can this be admitted? Surely not."

The question before us pertains to an office, an office having certain fixed names, qualifications and ordination, alleged to have been instituted by Christ and his Apostles in all the churches, and to be found in the earliest churches. Historical evidence is therefore all important, and that it is so, Dr. D. proves by his anxiety to state anything which as a fact might relieve his hopeless condition, and by throwing out as usual wholesale suspicions as to our accuracy and reliability, and that by alleging that the practice of Calvin and the other Reformers and of other churches is wrong.

"Our sweeping statements," says Dr. D., "are far from being accurate," and what is the proof of this very sweeping charge? Why, gentle reader, if you will believe it, it is nothing more nor less than that a certain John A. Lasco in the time of Edward VI, "uniformly practised ordination of elders by imposition of hands in the Presbyterian churches in London under him." To this is added the practice of the Bohemian brethren. But as for the admitted practice of Calvin and the early Scotch and of the French and Dutch churches, why they were and are certainly wrong, and the evidence of the New Testament was not, and is not accurately comprehended by them. (Now here is something very curious.) In our simplicity and ignorance, we had thought that in this very question, the opinions and practice of Calvin, Knox, Melville and the Books of Discipline and the Westminster Standards had great, yea *authoritative* weight in determining what is and is not clearly revealed as of Divine institution and necessary and Presbyterian, and that their views and those of the once glorious churches of France and Holland were immeasurably more to be depended on than John A. Lasco and the Bohemian brethren. And if Dr. D. will re-examine the First Book of Discipline and the Form and order of Election of Elders and Deacons in the church of Edinburgh, both published in 1560, John Knox being minister, he will find, that so far from his statements respecting them being correct, from the beginning their mode of election was very solemn and similar to that still followed in Scotland and in most of our own churches; and are we to go from such churches and from that Scottish church, which is the mother of us all, to Lasco and the Bohemians?

Who was Lasco? A very clever, zealous and good man no doubt, but was he a Presbyterian? Was his own little congregation and the three or four others in London *of different kinds, over which he exercised a kind of bishoprick*, Presbyterian? Did he not write a revision of the church of England's Forms, and report for the continuance of church wardens, deacons, priests, and rural deans, and whose churches, when he resigned, chose Gundal bishop of London as their superintendent? And as to the Bohemians, is it any argument to adduce a practice of those who chose laymen for their ministers, consecrated leavened bread, re-baptized all who joined them, and who afterwards conformed to the Zuinglian church?

What has all this to do towards relieving the overwhelming demonstration that ruling elders are not the ordained presbyters, bishops and pastors of scripture, found in the fact that they are not so regarded now by the standards of any Presbyterian church in the world, nor in those of any since the reformation; and that Luicer who believed in *lay*-elders, that is in what we call ruling elders, would find no example of them in all the Greek Fathers? Blondel was as unsuccessful among both Greek and Latin Fathers, and that therefore which has been everywhere and always rejected or unknown, cannot be an institution of christianity.

Dr. D. with Dr. Adger seems not to have realized the evident distinction between the divine warrant for ruling elders as an office, and for any particular mode or term of their election. It may be of divine right that there shall be ruling elders, or representatives of the people, and yet not of divine right that they shall be elected for a year, or two years, or for life; or that they shall rotate in active and earnest service for the church; or be elected in one way rather than in another. The ministry as an office may be of divine right and yet it is not of divine right that it can or cannot be demitted; or in what way the minister shall be elected pastor; or prepared and ordained; or become a pastor or a stated supply; or be removed from one church to another. The Lord's supper is of divine right but the mode, manner and times of observance are not of divine right. And the ruling elder might even be the presbyter or the ruler and governor of scripture, and yet the mode of election, the tenure of office, and the rotation of service be left to the wisdom and prudence of the church. Our church has not made either of these points essential by divine right. The mode of election is left to the churches and while the office is declared permanent, yet it is not made so by divine right nor so as that it cannot be demitted and by removal become inoperative. Dr. Miller teaches that the very mode of election recently denounced by the *Southern Presbyterian* is the most in use in our own and



other churches, and that in the early churches, in the churches of France, in the Reformed Dutch church; the office is either not perpetual or the service is rotary, and so far was he from an indiscriminating application of divine right to such points of order that he distinctly states, "*we do not suppose there is ANY infringement of the Presbyterian principle* in that annual election of ruling elder formerly and still practised." (Rul-Eld. p. 274.) Our opinion formerly and still held on this point as a question of expediency is entirely distinct from our theory of the nature and office of the eldership, and so far from being repudiated at Princeton was thus spoken of by Dr. Miller who goes on to say, "where a church is large, containing a sufficient number of grave, pious and prudent members to furnish an advantageous rotation, *it may not be without its advantages to keep up some change of incumbency of this office.*"

And Dr. Archibald Alexander selected as his text-book for church government, &c., our work on Presbytery and Prelacy, in which our views of the Eldership are distinctly embodied, and such was his estimate of the work and of our views that he sent the written information of his choice through Dr. James A., in a note dictated on his dying bed. Have different opinions prevailed in our church on the permanency and periodic exercise of the eldership? Yes, at all times, and they have even been practically carried out until the General Assembly decided it to be irregular, declaring however that "*it cannot invalidate the ordination of persons thus elected,*" (in 1835.)

#### THE ELDERS' SHORTER CATECHISM.

And now we would be glad to give our readers and Dr. D. a little relaxation, and "as he says this is really very funny!" we affirm again that our standards do not teach that the ruling elder is the ordained presbyter, bishop, and pastor of scripture which Dr. D. affirms he is. Suppose then we go through what we may call the Elder's Shorter Catechism.

Do our standards then ever call ruling elders presbyters? They never do. Do they ever call them bishops or pastors, or their office the pastoral office? Never. Do they not call elders shepherds, watchmen, overseers and teachers? Never. Do they not make the elder's office, the essence of which is ruling—the primary and fundamental office in the church? On the contrary, they always put the ministerial office first in order, declare that it is the first for dignity and usefulness; and on several occasions speak of it, and of it alone as "the sacred office" and "the holy office." Do they not call ministers a class of ruling elders? Never. Do our standards not teach that ministers as such have no power to rule or govern; that if they have not been ruling elders before becoming ministers, they

must as Dr. D. says, be introduced among the elders in order to become rulers; and that as Dr. Adger says it is only as ruling elders and representatives of the people, ministers sit in Session, Presbytery, &c.? Never. Have our standards no form introducing ministers into the eldership and giving them the ruling power? Nobody ever before heard of such "a very funny" thing. On the contrary they expressly say the MINISTER is called presbyter "*because* he governs or rules well." Do they not apply to ruling elders the qualifications laid down for bishops in I Tim. and Titus, and also Eph. 4: 11, I Pet. 5: 1, and Acts 20: 28. No, they apply them exclusively to ministers. Do they not make preaching a new function added by Christ to ruling elders? No, it was the function of a sacred and separate office from the days of Enoch through every period of the church's history. Were there preachers and preaching in the Jewish Synagogue? Yes, by persons called angel or bishop or presbyter. Were these official presbyters all ordained to preach and required to preach whenever called upon? Vitringa and Stillingfleet both say so, and Dr. Miller admits in several places (Rul. Eld. p. 37, 46, 54, 70, 75, 77, 100,) that this was the case both as to the presbyters of the synagogue and of the Fathers, though he thinks some very seldom preached, and yet he admits that afterwards they all became preachers. Can our ruling elders who never preach and were never ordained, nor expected to preach, be the same as these presbyters? Most assuredly not, for if they were, then as Dr. D. says, they must be trained and educated and set apart to their office by presbytery. Do our standards apply I Thess. 5: 12, 13, and Heb. 13: 7, 19, 21, to ruling elders as these writers do? They do not, but apply them to ministers only. Do our standards apply to ministers, I Tim. 5: 17, "the elders that rule well" which these writers apply exclusively to elders? They do and they teach that "*as it is the DUTY of ministers to govern or rule well* (using the very words) in the house or kingdom of Christ, he is termed PRESBYTER." But how do our standards prove this? They do it by I Pet. 5: 1, "the presbyters who are among you," &c., by Titus 1: 5, "and ordain presbyters in every city;" and by this passage of I Tim. 5: 1, 17, 19, inclusive. But is not one verse—v. 17, applied also as a proof text after the definition and description of ruling elders? It is. How then do you reconcile this with their calling ministers presbyters, and with their reason for so doing, namely, *because they rule or govern well*, which are the very words of v. 17? In this way after defining ruling elders to be "properly the representatives of the people," &c., they add that "this office has been understood to be *designated by the title* of governments and of *those that rule well*," thus shewing the ground on which they were so called by

many, while they do not, and could not have agreed to affirm that they are in fact so. But is not Chapter V of our Form of Government headed "Of Ruling Elders," and why? Because they were then, and are now, "commonly *called*" such. But how do you answer the objection that it is only on this one occasion our standards call ministers presbyters? We answer, 1. That once is as good as a hundred times. 2. They do not even once call ruling elders presbyters. 3. There was no occasion for repetition, because this name was not commonly in use for ministers. 4. The same is true of the names, angel, ambassador and steward. 5. Once for all, therefore, they attach to ministers the name presbyter and sustain it by "the presbyters that rule well" of I Tim. 5: 17, "because it is the minister's duty to govern well." Does this new theory of Dr. Dabney and others openly teach what is contrary to this? It does, and Dr. Dabney in this very article says that elders are presbyters in the strict and official sense, and he proves this by the very words our standards use to prove that ministers are presbyters.

Is the term clergy appropriate to ministers in a sense not applicable to elders? Yes, because the first minister chosen after our Saviour's death was chosen by the *cleron* or lot, and set apart by the imposition of hands of the other ministers, to the *cleron*—lot or office—of this ministry, and hence the word *clerical* or ministerial office.

Did Dr. Miller practically use the term? Yes, he published a volume on "Clerical manners and habits," in which he speaks of the "sacred office" and says, "it is the most truly honorable and important under heaven," p. 13: 14. Did Dr. Miller believe that ruling elders were not of this clerical order, but of a different and inferior order? He did. Did he think this distinction ought to be kept up? He did, and thought we could not otherwise be faithful to Christ. Why did he then object to ruling elders being called lay-elders? Because he thought it led many to think they are not, as he and we believe they are, spiritual and ecclesiastical officers.

Has Christ attached to the eldership any authority beyond that which he made to inhere in the body of the church of which they are the representatives? According to our standards, the office was instituted for the good, and elders act in the name of "the whole church;" and our General Assembly in 1827 decided that "the discipline exercised through them 'was' by their constituents in whose name and by whose authority they act in all that they do." "This, however, does not mean" as Dr. Miller who quotes it (Rul. Eld. p. 266) remarks in a note, "that they do not act in the name and by the authority of Christ," but that it is Christ's *design* that they should *so* act.

May not ruling elders moderate a session? No. "The pastor or some other minister shall always be the moderator of session." May an elder convene the session? No. "The pastor *has power* to convene the session whenever he may judge it *convenient*, or when requested to do so by two of the elders." Must an elder in order to sit in Presbytery be delegated specially by the session of his church, and if not known, produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the church which he represents? Yes. Who elect elders? The congregation. Can a congregation elect, that is make—as in the case of an elder, a minister? No. Only a Presbytery can do that. A congregation can elect a *pastor* by calling one who is a minister to labor among them. Who ordains elders? The minister. Who ordains the minister? The presbytery. How is an elder ordained? "The minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of ruling elder or deacon." Why! are elders and deacons ordained exactly in the same manner? They are by one and the same form. If an elder becomes unacceptable, can he cease to act? Yes. If he removes from one church to another; is he still an acting elder? No. Is this true of a minister? No, *it is not*, for go where he will, he is still an active, efficient minister. Do our Standards then in every way make a fundamental distinction between ministers and elders in name, office, dignity, usefulness, ordination, power and prerogative? They do. By what texts do they prove the divine institution of ruling elders? The very same we employ—that is, 1 Cor. xii: 28; Rom. vii: 7, 8; and Acts xv; and by 1 Tim. v: 17—for the name. The original terms in the English translation being rendered "elders that rule well," hence ruling elders. We cheerfully employ the same name in the *large* sense of the term, and call them ruling elders. Do these theorists, as our standards do, regard these texts as sufficient to prove a divine warrant for this office? *They do not*. Dr. D. says unless ruling elders are the ordained presbyters and pastors and teachers of Scripture, they have no divine warrant and have no business in our system. Dr. Thornwell, also, says it is idle to say the Apostle by "government" meant governors.

Dr. Breckinridge and all of them ignore Acts xv altogether as a clear proof of elders in the chosen "brethren," the representatives of the churches. Are not our standards, then, "disreputably ignorant of the Presbyterian system?" So it would seem. And does "our General Assembly also put the eldership in a very anomalous position?" It must be admitted that, according to this theory, it does; *for* though the *Southern Presbyterian* said it was new to it and its readers, yet it is a fact that after three successive years' discussion it decided that "ministers are possessed of all the powers belonging to ruling



elders—that imposition of hands is a declarative ministerial act and ought to be performed, therefore, by ministers alone—that ruling elders are not bishops, pastors, ministers, nor even presbyters, in exactly the same sense that ministers are—and that the theory which makes ruling elders presbyters and claims for them the right to impose hands in the ordination of ministers, tends to subvert the office of ruling elders by confounding it with that of minister of the word.” “It is the doctrine of the Independents and not of Presbyterians,” adds the Assembly, “that ruling elders had the right to impose hands in the ordination of ministers.” And the General Assembly goes on to say, “in favor of the decision of the Assembly, or rather of the last two Assemblies, it can be shewn that the decision accords with the word of God, with the very words of our Constitution, with the uniform practice of those who framed the Constitution, with the uniform practice of all other Presbyterian churches, and we cannot but express the hope that a matter which has been decided by a full and careful examination by the whole church and by such large majorities, may be considered as settled, and it will not be made a subject of future agitation.”

Ought not these highly esteemed brethren to be satisfied with that decision, and with our standards, and with the eldership as there held forth? We are, and we think they might be. These were good enough for Dr. Miller, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Rice, &c., and they are good enough for us.

Might we not, then, close the controversy by a compromise? We think so, and we are ready for it. What is it? It is to go back to our standards and just call the ruling elder what they call him, and the minister by all the names, including presbyter, which they call him; by believing that all the passages they apply to ministers do not apply in the same sense or properly to ruling elders; and by greatly magnifying the office of the ministry as they do and as the Apostle did. Finally, ought not ruling elders to be very thankful to us for defending them from the imposition upon them of clerical titles, clerical office, clerical duties, and clerical responsibilities? We think so, for who among them could endure to be clothed with the pastoral office without education, fitness, desire, or opportunity for it—without, in short, a call to the ministry?

## OPINION OF CHANCELLOR JOB JOHNSTONE, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, ON THE ELDERSHIP.

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MESSRS. EDITORS: I am at liberty by a letter from Chancellor Job Johnstone, who is one of the oldest and ablest judges of S. C., and everywhere venerated as a veteran and actively prominent Ruling Elder, to publish the following opinion, written soon after the appearance of my first article in the *Repertory*. That his perusal of the entire argument has not altered his opinion will appear from a note in Sept., in which he says, "I entirely agree with all you have said on the Eldership in the *Princeton Review*, and long to see what you have yet to say upon it;" and from one of Dec. 24, in which he says, "My faith in your positions has held out to the end. I have read your third number and am still of the opinion I expressed in my long letter." The opinion is independent and very original and will well repay perusal. It gives also an original and startling opinion on the origin of our present discord and disunion.

THOMAS SMYTH.

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I have read with much pleasure your article in the *Princeton Review*. I see not how it is to be answered. It seems to me to exhibit the true view of the question. The confounding the *merely lay* rulers of congregations, appointed by *them*, with the clergy appointed by the *higher* courts of the church, with distinct and higher functions, by assigning to both classes the same grade and order, does appear to me, not only a contradiction of the views of the Scottish Reformers and of the teachings of the Bible, but of common sense. As you say the fundamental principle involved in the dissemination of the Gospel is preaching and not ruling. The normal idea is that the gospel is sent *ab extra* to a people destitute of it. They have no church to govern; but are first to receive the gospel and *then* become organized. It is only after the gospel is implanted that organization and of course government begins. When the Presbyter (the minister) is called by the organized body to take the oversight of them, he *thereby* becomes a ruler among them. This makes him a ruler in the congregation by its own choice. In this latter capacity and in the same way he becomes colleague with the elders whom they choose. It is *only in this particular*, that a parity exists between the two classes. This is my view of the matter; and I believe it to be the view of Presbyterians abroad and *generally* at home.

The elders who are deputed to represent the congregation in the higher courts, act in these courts only as representatives of the congregation. Of course when sitting there they have a voice and a vote in the proceedings of the body, and among other things upon the licensure, or censure or deposition of ministers. And they may vote upon the ordaining of a minister, but to take part in the ritual of ordination is no part of their function; and my blood runs cold, when I see them, as I have seen them, join in laying on of hands, &c.

In all this I may be wrong, but these are my sentiments.

On the Elder question which agitated the church in this country some years ago, I thought and still think there was much misplaced excitement. Each congregation is entitled, if it chooses, to be represented. And this is enough, in all reason, to secure the interest and safety of the congregations of the people or *laos*. They cannot be oppressed unless by their own neglect. And if a measure injurious to them should pass at a Presbytery in which they are not represented, they have only to take the alarm and delegate to the next and review or rescind it. What more can be demanded by them? That they should claim to annihilate a Presbytery by this mere *vis inertiae* of staying away from Presbytery? Can they extinguish the church in this way? In a region of country where there are no churches, (and of course no elders,) surely ministers may meet as a Presbytery; and after congregations have sprung up, do they become possessed of the singular privilege of stopping the wheels of the church, and taking away the rights of the ministers by either willfully or negligently abstaining from exercising their own?

There is one point on which I would, with deference, differ from what I understand to be a view entertained by some leading men in the church, and that is in relation to tenure of elders. I abhor democracy in all its aspects, and would not willingly assent to the periodical election of the elders. It will produce evil, and only evil continually. Give me a stable representative government. But none of your democracy or congregationalism in church or State.

I believe that the congregationalism of New England is full of all the anarchy of which we have had such bitter experience in the civil affairs of these States for so many years, and of which I see no happy end. The Independents of England ruined the noble struggle for popular government there, and I fear—I think I see—that the Independents of New England are ruining the noblest structure of government ever possessed by man, in America. Lord grant that I may be mistaken.

J. JOHNSTONE.

## FIVE THEORIES OF THE ELDERSHIP—STATED AND CONTRASTED.

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We propose in a concluding article to bring together the five Theories of the Eldership, that your readers may at once perceive the points of contrast, and

### I. THE WESTMINSTER FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

This Form was adopted by the Church of Scotland and continues to be embodied in the Confession of Faith of that church; and in all its affiliated branches in Scotland, Ireland, America, and in every part of the world. It was also the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and formed the basis for the nomenclature and much of the form and usage of our present revised Form of Government.

This Form of Government recognizes three orders of officers and offices in the church, each distinct and separate, and each having qualifications and functions, that is, work and duties, which it has authority and power to discharge.

MINISTERS, when there is only one in a church, are according to it called Pastors, to whose office it belongs to pray in public; to read the scriptures publicly; to dispense the word and other ordinances, to bless the people; to take care of the poor, "and he hath also *ruling power over the flock as pastor.*" This point was much argued and emphatically taught, and is proved by I Tim. 5: 17; Acts 20: 17 and 28; I Thess. 5: 12; Heb. 13: 7 and 17.

The minister is to moderate all ecclesiastical meetings.

It gives to ministers alone the right to ordain ministers by imposition of hands. This point was elaborately discussed in controversy with the Independents and is enforced in several distinct sections.

According to this theory, therefore, and in direct conflict with the theory of Dr. Dabney and others, the ministry is 1. a distinct and separate order of office from ruling elders. 2. It is a superior and pre-eminent office. 3. The qualifications prescribed for a bishop in I Tim. 3, and in Titus belong to it. 4. In its very nature it implies a ruling power, so that the minister is *ex-officio* a ruler. 5. He is the presbyter of scripture. He is the presbyter that rules well, that were over them in the Lord, that were convened by Paul at Miletus, that were addressed by Peter, to whom the collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem were sent up. They are the pastors and teachers



of St. Paul, the ministers commissioned by Christ, and instead of being a new function attached to the eldership, evangelical pastors are successors of the Priests and Levites who were to be continued under the gospel, (Is. 56: 21.)

RULING ELDERS, according to this Form, are not called by this name. This was denied them, as Gillespie informs us, because it belonged to ministers and the use of it might tend to confound the eldership with the ministry and destroy it. They were therefore called "other church governors," and it is said Reformed churches commonly call them "elders," but not ruling elders as stated in our book.

These governors or elders "are to *join* with the minister (not the minister with them,) in the government of the church." This is proved only by I Cor. 14: 26, and Rom. 12: 6; and I Tim. 5: 17, was after very full discussion, denied them, while not one of all the other passages appropriated to them by Dr. Dabney and others was applied to them but were strictly limited to the minister.

It is also taught that there "*ought* in every single congregation to be one to labor in word and doctrine and TO RULE," (which is again proved by I Tim. 5: 17, and Heb. 13: 7;) "and it is also requisite that there should be others to join in government," in which, as Gillespie informs us, it was taught that the ministry was by divine right essential to every church, but that while the eldership as an office was of divine right, it was not of divine right essential that elders should exist in every church.

## II. OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

In interpreting our standards let it be borne in mind that in 1729 the above Form of Government was formally adopted by our church "as agreeable in substance to the word of God, and founded thereupon," and that in 1786 in view of subdividing the Synod and constituting the General Assembly. "The Westminster standards were revised" in connection with Stewart's collection, and our present Form of Government adopted.

It is therefore to be presumed that on all points of doctrine there will be found an agreement.

In accordance with it our Form of Government recognizes three perpetual offices or orders of officers in the church "distinct" from each other and called in Ch. xiii: 81, interchangeably "officers of the church" and "ecclesiastical rulers." The ministry is "the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness." It is called "the pastoral office," "the holy office" (p. 441, 443,) and "sacred office." (431, 432, 439.)

Ministers are tried, licensed, ordained and installed by Presbytery. The Presbytery alone can judge, remove, suspend or depose ministers.

Ministers also are to moderate in all church courts, and have power to convene the session whenever they may judge it requisite. They are also *ex-officio* members of session, presbytery and synod.

A minister, when ordained, is a minister every where and always, and is only brought into contact with the people, except indirectly or as a preacher, when he becomes a Stated Supply or Pastor of a church.

In cases of ordination, installation and organization of churches, a committee of ministers is appointed by presbytery.

In all these and other ways the office of the ministry is set forth, separated and exalted as the first in the church for dignity and usefulness.

This is further evident from the names ascribed to it, the qualifications prescribed and the proof texts by which all these are established.

Among the names given to the minister by our standards are five which are appropriated by the recent theory to ruling elders, viz, bishop, pastor, minister, presbyter and overseer, and in proof of these and the qualifications and duties implied in them, every passage applied by this theory to ruling elders is appropriated to the ministry except the two passages of I Cor. 12: 28, and Rom. 12: 7, 8.

"As the minister has oversight of the flock (or is overseer) he is termed bishop. This is proved by Acts 20: 28—the *very text adduced to prove that ruling elders are overseers*—and there is added this note which is constitutional, having been presented and adopted with the constitution. "As this term bishop is peculiarly expressive of his duty as an overseer of the flock, it ought not to be rejected."

Again, as the minister feeds the flock with spiritual food, he is termed pastor, which is proved by Jer. 3: 15 and by Eph. 4: 11, 12, (see on p. 411) and by I Pet. 5: 2-4, which are the very passages employed by this new theory to prove that ruling elders are pastors.

Again, as the minister serves the church of Christ he is termed MINISTER, and yet ruling elders are to be known and recognized as ministers.

But again, as it is the duty of the minister to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, AND to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed PRESBYTER.

Now, on this declaration note, 1. That as the minister "is particularly and fully described in the holy scriptures under the title of bishop, and as that term is peculiarly expressive of

his duty," so he is also the presbyter of scripture. 2. That the primary reference of the term presbyter is not to ruling but to gravity, dignity and wisdom. 3. That as these qualities constitute the natural foundation of authority and rule, the term presbyter became associated with rule; and therefore as it is the duty of the minister to rule in the church, he is in this full and matured sense of the term called presbyter. 4. That for some reason not necessary to complete the idea of ruling, and not given in the text, it is said to be the DUTY of the minister to govern or rule WELL—wherefore is this word WELL? 5. The reason, and the *only* reason for so unusual a term is found in the proof texts which are I Pet. 5: 1, and Titus 1: 5, I Tim. 5: 11, 17, 19, including the words, "LET THE PRESBYTERS THAT RULE OR GOVERN WELL," so that it is here declared to be the duty of MINISTERS "to govern or rule WELL," because the Apostle says, "let the PRESBYTERS rule or *govern* WELL," &c. 6. The minister therefore is not only the bishop of scripture and the presbyter of scripture, but also "the presbyter that rules well."

Now in opposition to this it is taught by the new theory that, 1. The minister is not the bishop of scripture. 2. That he is not the presbyter of scripture. 3. That it is not his duty or office to rule at all. 4. That he is not the presbyter that rules well, "which beyond the possibility of a doubt, refers, we are told, exclusively to ruling elders." 5. This theory teaches that all these proof texts are erroneously applied by our standards to ministers and belong exclusively to ruling elders.

RULING ELDERS, according to our standards, are a distinct class of perpetual officers or rulers in the church. Of these three kinds are first enumerated (in Ch. III) and each kind as distinct and separate is treated of in a separate chapter, and each as a distinct office. 1. We have "the pastoral office," which is also "the holy" and "the sacred office." Then, 2. We have "this office" of ruling elders. And then, 3. "The scriptures point out deacons as distinct officers in the church."

"Ruling elders are the representatives of the people chosen by them, for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers."

Now note 1. That this definition was taken almost verbatim from Pardovan's collections of the Church of Scotland. 2. That unlike ministers they come directly at once, and without any special training or education, from the people. 3. That they are chosen by the people. 4. That they are chosen to exercise government and discipline *in conjunction with* ministers, whereas, according to the new theory, "ministers are first introduced among the elders and set in church courts as elders, that they may exercise government and discipline in conjunction with ruling elders." 5. That according to this theory, as ruling

elders are both pastors and ministers, the passage ought to read, "in conjunction with the other pastoral elders," and in this way the quorum question would be easily settled. 6. All the power exercised by ruling elders though instituted by Christ is in the name, and as representatives of the people. Thus our General Assembly in 1826 declared (as quoted by Dr. Miller, p. 266,) "that the discipline lawfully exercised by them is the discipline exercised through them by their constituents, in whose name and by whose authority they act in all that they do."

Of ruling elders it is further said, "this office has been understood by a great part of Protestant Reformed churches to be designated in the holy scriptures by the title of governments and those that rule well, but do not labor in word and doctrine."

Now note 1. That in the Church of Scotland's Form of Government previously in use and the assigned basis of this, it was said, (1) "which officers reformed churches" not "a great part of it," (2) "commonly call" and not "has been understood," and (3) "elders" and not "ruling elders." Now for these changes *no authority can be given*, and as an opinion—which it merely is—is much less reliable than the original. 2. Note the basis given in the text for this change of expression is not in scripture which does not speak of those presbyters who rule well, "*but do not labor in word and doctrine*," and this therefore could not be a justifiable ground for such an alleged *understanding*. 3. Note that if those presbyters who rule well do not labor in word and doctrine, then for the same reason those who labor in word and doctrine do not rule, which would give two distinct orders of presbyters, one to rule alone and one to preach alone. 4. Note that if this clause is taken for more than a general *explanation*, it involves our book in three contradictions (1) in affirming that ruling elders are chosen to exercise government in conjunction with ministers who *do not rule* at all, (2) in affirming of ministers that it is a part of their inherent official duty to govern the church, (3) in quoting as proof that ruling elders "rule well but do not labor in word and doctrine" the very words already quoted to prove that the presbyter who labors in word and doctrine is by his very office bound to rule or govern. 5. Note that all this confusion arises from adding this explanatory clause in a form so unauthorized by our previous standards and adding to it as a proof text one which those previous standards had purposely excluded. 6. Note that after all, the minister is according to our standards and the previous standards also, THE PRESBYTER, bishop and minister of scripture and the presbyter that rules well, and this clause must be held merely as an explanation of the origin of the name now commonly given to ruling elders. 7. And finally,



that to insist on making this explanation a definition or authoritative would not only involve our book in a historical error, and in contrariety to previous standards, and in manifold contrariety to itself, but would not in the least benefit this new theory which denies 1. That ministers are the presbyters of scripture. 2. That they are as ministers presbyters at all. 3. That they are rulers. 4. That they are the presbyters that rule well. 5. That they are bishops, overseers and pastors. 6. That they are the presbyters, pastors and bishops referred to in Acts 20, in Eph. 4, in I Tim. 3: 1, in Tit. 1: 5, in I Pet. 5, in I Thess. 5: 12, 13, all which our standards teach, and 7. Which denies that ruling elders be referred to in Acts 15, by the brethren who were chosen and who sat in and acted with the church at Jerusalem, nay which rejects as a proof text for ruling elders, I Cor. 12, where "governments" are spoken of; and 9. Which positively affirms that unless the ruling elder is allowed to be, and our standards do not allow him to be, the ordained bishop, presbyter, pastor and overseer of scripture, there is no divine warrant for his office at all and he has no business in our church at all.

But in deciding whether we are right in the interpretation of this clause and of the use I Tim. 5: 17, much will depend on the subsequent provisions of our Form of Government respecting these two offices. Are official dignity and authority and rule attributed to the ministry more than to the eldership or the reverse? And who can hesitate to decide?

The term *ruling* is frequently dropped and these officers are spoken of as simply *elders*.

Their active official power as rulers only extends beyond their particular church when "appointed *delegates* (*this is the term*) to the higher judicatories of the church."

"Every elder not known to Presbytery shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the church which he represents."

One Form for "electing and ordaining Ruling Elders and Deacons" is appointed, and imposition of hands is not included. The same qualifications for office are required for both and the same obligations are imposed on both, the same obediences is required towards both; and both are called "ecclesiastical rulers." (Ch. xiii: 51.)

III. Our own theory differs in no respect from what we have represented as the fair, impartial and literal interpretation of our standards.

Beyond this we hold nothing as pertaining either to the ministry or the eldership except the opinion as to the mode of election of elders, so as to have a rotation in office or in duty. This however we hold distinctly as an opinion based on our

experience as to what would be expedient and beneficial and we hold it, as we have shewn, in perfect accordance with the expressed opinion of Dr. Miller, and with a belief in the divine warrant of the office, and we at least have always had the candor to confess that in this opinion we differed from the established usage of our standards.

IV. Of Dr. Miller's theory it may also be sufficient to say that it differs from that represented as the theory of our standards only in one point.

Our standards adopt the title of Ruling Elders because it had become common, and not because they anywhere teach that the words in I Tim. 5: 17, "the presbyters who are good presidents" were properly translated "elders who rule well," and meant really such officers; but because many of the Reformers had been of this opinion and the use of them had gradually become common in the name ruling elders. The words however in their strict original sense they appropriate to ministers.

Dr. Miller adopted the view of those Reformed churches which did apply these words to ruling elders in a *large or generic sense*, and therefore he was led with Neander (in that particular) to consider ruling elders as included under presbyters in this large generic sense in the New Testament and among the early Fathers.

He also urged as a more solemn form of ordination that ruling elders should with the pastor impose hands in the ordination of elders and deacons.

With these differences the theory of Dr. Miller and our standards and ourselves are one and the same.

V. Wherein then does the theory of Dr. Dabney, Dr. Adger and others differ from these theories?

The reply is—it differs from every one of them, in everything essential, and it differs from itself in its form of presentation by different writers.

This theory recognizes only one order or office of rulers in the church, who are ruling elders and not ministers, and are the ordained presbyters, bishops, pastors and overseers of the New Testament. Our standards make the ministry a distinct order or office, make it the first both for dignity and usefulness, make it by its very nature a ruling office; appropriate to it, exclusively, each of the above titles; speak of elders as a distinct order chosen to rule in *conjunction* with ministers; and in Ch. xiii: 1, identify the terms officers (used in Ch. iii: 6) with "rulers," and speak of elders and deacons as "ecclesiastical rulers," and shew how they "should be ordained to *their* respective offices," and "discharge *their* several duties."

This theory makes two classes of this one order of presbyters, the ruler and the preacher, and yet "the preacher as

such is not a presbyter" nor a ruler, and yet he is "not by any means of a different order," and yet "he sits in our church courts as a ruling elder," and yet before he could do this "if not already ruling elders, they must be introduced among the ruling elders," and yet though elders are not preachers, they must be apt to teach, and are teachers in as important a sense as ministers are, and "his function is as purely a teaching function as that of the preacher," and preaching so far from being nearly all of religious teaching is less than half. Ruling elders, therefore, are clergy, have the care of souls, fill the pastoral office and discharge pastoral duties. They are, in fact, one and the same, and as they are not by any means of a different order, the distinction of class is in name merely and not in reality.

This theory, therefore, is novel, anti-constitutional and revolutionary; and as it is based not on a generic or large sense of the term presbyter, but upon the assumption that that term designates officially ruling elders alone, it finds no support in any writer, from Calvin to their own day, so far as is known to us.

But if we are to have it, let it be digested into some one formula of expression and of proof, and in the meantime, that we may no longer be found speaking evil of dignities, we suggest a phraseology to be adopted by our editors, and clerks of presbyteries, and churches generally, and that is, let elders be addressed as *The Reverend Clergy*. Ministers *The Right Reverend Clergy*, and Professors as *Right Reverend Fathers in God*, and may they wear their honors meekly!

N. B.—This nomenclature would be very serviceable on occasions of college and other civic processions, by levelling the number of clergy and adding other high-sounding and imposing titles. Elders might also wear white cravats, while ministers could add bands and professors gowns.

N. B. 2.—We would also advise the necessity of caution in introducing the new modes of address required by this theory. Letters addressed to the Rev. James Hunt, pastor of the Presbyterian church at such a place, might excite no little commotion in these times of revolutionary suspicion and involve innocent parties in danger, unless returned unclaimed to the dead letter office. Just imagine the consternation and bewilderment of a quiet, sober-minded family on the receipt of such a letter by some quondam store-keeper, lawyer, or physician of the place. It would certainly throw them either into a fit of—laughter—or of—lockjaw.

N. B. 3.—As we are now about to reorganize society, it is a most favorable time for inaugurating the new order of teach-

ing and solemnly ordained ruling elders, by requiring them, as we are bound to do, to go through a regular course of collegiate and theological training, that they may be "apt to teach" and prove themselves as good and truly teachers as ministers are. To require them to be teaching elders and pastors with the care of souls, without being "adapted" and trained to teach, is like sending our volunteers to fight without discipline or arms.

T. S.



## THEORIES OF THE ELDERSHIP—THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

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*Mistakes mistaken—The reviewer reviewed—And the right side up again.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: In the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for October last, there was the commencement of a Review of the articles in the *Repertory* on Theories of the Eldership which is well adapted to increase "the factitious value given to them by their appearance in that *Review*." The very kind manner in which their author was spoken of by Dr. Adger would disarm any severity of criticism, even though provoked, on the part of one who on every ground of personal or professional estimation, cordially reciprocates the feelings which dictated the unmerited eulogium. This was kindly intended no doubt to palliate the severity which "he felt bound in that outspoken, manly candor which knows no man after the flesh," to *signalize* some of the *many flagrant* errors into which we were led. We accept his assurance of "speaking always very plainly and distinctly but never with any design to offend," and as we told him in advance, we ask a fair field and no favor. Our very unique and extensive collection of books on such subjects is now at his command, including Blondel's great work, of which, after twenty years search abroad, we only recently became possessed and have cheerfully subjected to his use.

We have no intention of reviewing his argument which must necessarily be similar to that of Dr. Dabney. But as we have not the privilege of doing it elsewhere, we would be glad to put ourselves right before your readers by illustrating the nature of some of the glaring and enormous errors Dr. A. has signalized.

And let me say once for all, that we neither profess to be infallible nor free from actual mistakes. In a search involving so many and such constant references, pursued amid the engrossing pastoral duties of a large church, in a city, at the midnight hour, and now in the midst of revolutionary scenes and of preparations for immediate war, and in the momentary expectation of hearing the booming cannon, the roar of artillery from various batteries, the quick rattle of musketry, the fierce shouts of the assault, the groans of the dying and the welkin ring of victory, we could hardly fail to make mistakes. And if the most cautious mercantile account is rendered with "errors excepted," we may well be allowed to make the same reserva-

tion. Besides our argument is cumulative. It does not depend upon any one, or any number of facts, but upon the force of all, together and as a whole. We only add that we have taken much trouble to be accurate, and have never, knowingly, misrepresented, and that apparent errors will upon careful examination be found sustained.

1. Dr. Adger's first and harshest signalization of flagrant error is (See p. 579, 580,) in relation to our work on the Eldership, published in 1845, in which we had a chapter in favor of electing elders only for a term of years, though capable of reelection, and of dividing labor so that in rotation each portion might assume, for a time, active and self-denying duty. Of this work Dr. A. says, 1. "Princeton at the hands of the venerable Dr. Miller repudiated this doctrine." 2. "It was fit pre-eminently to be ranked amongst theories of the eldership, and yet has been strangely omitted from this *category* (catalogue?) of all the works on the subject of "ru'ing *powers* (elders?)" 3. "That work struggled hard to destroy all proof of the ruling elder's office from "the *elders that rule well*," in I Tim. 5: 17."

Now in reply let us say: 1. We did not introduce that book by name because we really did not know how to speak of its great merits as they deserved, seeing it was our own, and particularly when we thought that it had been so completely forgotten that our exhumation of its bony skeleton would have exhibited unpardonable vanity. Besides in these articles we embodied the very same views of the divine right of the eldership as an office in the church, and our recent argument had nothing to do with the mode of election of elders, but was limited to the single point—Is the ruling elder the presbyter, bishop and pastor of scripture and of our standards? Dr. A. fails therefore to appreciate our extreme modesty and low estimate of our own abilities, and to discriminate between the eldership and the mode of its election.

As to I Tim. 5: 17, "The elders that rule well;" are we not bound to struggle hard to secure this to ministers and to rescue it out of the hands of these marauders who would actually rob the ministry of its good name, and give it and "the pastoral office" to elders? Seeing also that our standards employ these very words and this very text to prove that because it is the duty of the minister to govern—*rule*—we'll the house and kingdom of Christ HE, not the elder, is called PRESBYTER.

Dr Adger very gratuitously and without foundation alleged that my views on the temporary tenure of the office of the eldership were repudiated by the venerable Dr. Miller and by the *Princeton Review* of that day. Dr. Hodge's general views are known. Dr. A. Alexander approved, and continued to approve until his death, for when not far from death he called Dr. James

W. Alexander to him and dictated the following note in reference to our work, in which our Elder views are distinctly embodied :

"When I found Church Government on my hands," said he, "I looked around for a text book ; and on examining the others, settled on Dr. Smyth's Presbytery and Prelacy as the best, and determined to introduce it at once." He added, "I wish Dr. S. to know this."

And as it regards Dr. Miller, Dr. Adger will find that in his work on the Eldership, while treating on Election of Elders, and after shewing from p. 271 to 274 that a temporary election had been universal in all the Reformed and Scottish churches, and in the French and Reformed Dutch churches, he adds himself and for himself, "he (Dr. M.) does not suppose that there is any infringement of *Presbyterian principle* in the annual election of elders formerly practised in the Church of Scotland, and *still* practised in the Dutch and French churches." And he goes on to say that "where a church is large, &c., *it may not be without its advantages* to keep up some change of incumbence in the office."

We think Dr. A. and our readers will allow that we get very cleverly out of this snare, and that Dr. A. missed his mark that time.

2. Dr. A. denies that he ever did set forth the theory we imputed to him. Now, as we are more anxious to draw him to us than to drive him from us, we will not insist upon our statement, but will ask a few questions. We say, then, Dr. Adger's statements make not one order of presbyters with two classes, as Dr. Thornwell's theory affirms, though inconsistently, since he positively declares that "the presbyter as a title of office means a ruler and *nothing more*," that "*beyond the possibility of a doubt* presbyters and ministers of the word are not synonymous terms," and "that it is not applicable to ministers of the word." Of course, then, ministers cannot be a class of *presbyters*, and generically the same. Now does not Dr. Adger agree with these statements? "The true view," says he, "makes the ruling elder to be the ab-original presbyter, and the essence of the presbyterate ruling."

Here then is Dr. Adger's one order of presbyters. They are all ruling elders and only ruling elders. What then does he make of *preachers*? the only name unless it be angel left to them, since he says of elders, "there, i. e. in Scotland, he is a minister," a very wonderful story to tell to those who know what Scotch and Irish elders are! Why he continues in the same exposition to say that his theory "views preaching as a *function*, a *charisma* (or gift) as Neander expresses it, which

came to be superadded to certain of the rulers. They had suitable talents, and so were chosen and called to that work."

Does it not then follow as clear as noon day that Dr. Adger's theory makes only one order, *certain* of "whom come to have the *gift* or *function* of preaching superadded, and so were chosen and called to that *work*." Ministers are called to a work, function or office (for Dr. A. makes these synonymous) of the one order of presbyters. But this is exactly what we said was his theory of the eldership, but which he now repudiates. If so, we are very glad for his former statement in his Inaugural discourse involved him in an open secession from any further union with our Form of Government, and rendered his theory revolutionary. Is it on this account it is popular in the South? If revolution is demanded by truth and duty, let it come, but let us understand each other.

Dr. A. says his theory makes the presbyters or bishops at Miletus ruling elders; our government makes them ministers. (Ch. iv.) Dr. A. makes Paul's description of the bishop given to Timothy and Titus "relate to the ruling elder;" our government to ministers only. (Ch. iii. and iv.) Dr. A. makes the presbyters "whom Titus ordained in every city, ruling elders *in distinction from teaching* elders;" our government makes them ministers. (Ch. iv. p. 413.) Dr. A. makes the *bishop* of Paul "simply a ruler," to whom the "duty of public instruction *does not belong officially*;" our government declares that "the office and character of the gospel minister is particularly and fully described in the Holy Scriptures under the title of bishop;" and whereas Dr. A. calls ruling elders '*overseers*,' our government says "as this term bishop is peculiarly expressive of his duty as an overseer of the flock, it ought not to be rejected."

See Ch. iv. and the Note which was a part of the original constitution and is authoritative. (See Baird's Digest.) With what face then can Dr. A. tell our elders that "they are not sensible that the Holy Ghost hath made them *overseers* over the flock to feed the church of God?" Truly this is a case "where ignorance is bliss and 'tis folly to be wise," for if they *discerned*, they must either become crazed or called with an holy calling, for surely no ruling elder is aware "of the awful cure of immortal souls which he has suffered to be bound for life upon his shoulders."

Dr. A. calls the ruling elder "the minister," "pastor," "shepherd of the blood bought flock." Now our government applies these to ministers *alone*.

Is it not then novel and revolutionary, and is it not perfect "Tom-foolery" to find brethren publishing a discourse on "The Pastoral Office of Ruling Elders?" At this rate we will soon



have a Babel confusion of tongues, and be incapable of understanding one another. What would Dr. Miller have said to such confusion worse confounded? He would have said, "these things ought not so to be. To the law and testimony," &c.

But enough, though we could go on. But thirdly, Dr. A. charges us with a mistake so flagrant that it must be signalized, because we said that our government recognized three orders of officers in the church and not one, and that in giving the first "bishops or pastors," we added in a parenthesis (or presbyters, see Ch. iv.) This is charged with unfairness and it is said, "words are interpolated unhesitatingly to suit the necessities of a theory." But what in the world has aroused this holy indignation? Nothing but the conviction that our government in Ch. iv calls those presbyters ministers, &c., whom in a more general reference in Ch. iii it calls bishops and pastors, and that it limits exclusively to ministers each of these titles, that is bishop, pastor and presbyter, and that it thus undermines the very foundation on which this theory is unconstitutionally made to rest.

4. And this leads to another flagrant error which Dr. A. thinks ought to be made conspicuous. We affirm that our standards do most unequivocally and formally appropriate the disputed title of presbyter to ministers, and that it never applies it to ruling elders, and that this theory which makes the ruling elder the ordained presbyter of scripture is manifestly unconstitutional, and if our standards are correct, unscriptural. This conclusion is strengthened when we say that the same thing is true of the terms bishop, pastor, teacher and overseer, which this theory appropriates to the elders and our standards to ministers alone, and the conclusion becomes overwhelming where the reason assigned by our standards for giving to ministers the title of presbyter and the proof adduced from scripture are duly considered. That reason is "as it is his duty to be grave, &c., and to *govern* well in the house and kingdom of Christ he is termed presbyter or elder," and the proof is I Tim. 5: 17, "the elders that *rule* well," I Pet. 5: 1, and Titus 1: 5, *the very passages* on which this theory essentially depends and in opposition to which the minister is here taught to be *ex-officio* a ruler or governor, and to be a presbyter *because* it is his duty to rule or govern well, and to be the presbyter of Peter and of Titus.

Now our flagrant mistake is that all this occurs only *once*. But it does occur once and in the chapter which formally delineates "the pastoral office," not the hocus-pocus "pastoral office of ruling elders," but of ministers. Once for all, it delineates its titles, several of which do not occur again because not commonly used, and it *never* in one instance calls ruling

elders any thing else than elders or ruling elders. The argument is decisive. According to the Presbyterian system of our standards, the minister *as such* is the presbyter, and *as such* is a ruler, and this theory is both unconstitutional and unscriptural. The objection from the use of I Tim. 5: 15, in connection with ruling elders, we have already disposed of in the Elder's Shorter Catechism. Our standards cannot contradict themselves, and in using this same passage for elders it *must* mean, what we think it evidently does, that they were "*commonly called*" ruling elders because many had supposed "the elders that rule well" referred to them.

A fifth flagrant mistake is found in our assertion still made that elders are not called ruling elders nor presbyters in the standards of the Scotch and all affiliated churches, and were formally and after discussion *rejected* by the Westminster Assembly in their Form of Government which calls them "*other church governors*," that is *besides* those who are ministers; and in their proof texts, which were discussed as elaborately as their statements, I Tim. 5: 17, was, as Gillespie says, "denied them." And it cannot be believed that our standards which were framed in accordance with them and adopted much of their nomenclature that an antagonism so pointed as this theory implies could possibly be found. The truth is that the term presbyter came to be reserved exclusively for ministers and ruling elders as commonly given to them.

Now to prove this a flagrant error ought to be conspicuously held forth. Dr. A. refers to the Second Book of Discipline. Now that is not in the present standards of THE CHURCH of Scotland. It is not found in her Confession of Faith. It is the legal basis of the union of the Church of Scotland and the State, and as such is in force legally, historically and morally, not ecclesiastically, and knowing this we referred to the Confession of Faith and Form of Government authorized and in use in all churches connected or affiliated with the Church of Scotland.

A sixth flagrant mistake is our designation of this theory "which identifies ruling elders and presbyters" as novel, whereas it is found according to Dr. A. as old as Guthrie, Gillespie, Calvin, &c. In regard to our giving 1726 "as the date of Guthrie's producing his short treatise of the Eldership," *we did no such thing*. We said not a word or syllable on that subject, because we knew that *he never published it at all*; that a manuscript ascribed to Guthrie was presented to Presbytery, and we presume, published in 1726; and that we would have been as much mistaken as Dr. A. is, had we ascribed its publication to any earlier date. But the date was of no consequence, and not referred to in our argument.

The truth of our statement of novelty and of Dr. Adger's confusion will be found in considering that "the theory which *identifies* presbyters and ruling elders" is a very different thing from the use of presbyter or elder in a *large and defined* sense by Calvin, Knox, Guthrie, &c., as a name for elders. To be *identical* is to be the *very same, self same, one and the same* in every thing, not merely in name, but in nature, qualification, duties and relations, to be in short the ordained presbyter, bishop, pastor and overseer of scripture, as referred to in Acts 20: 28, 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1: 5, 1 Pet. 5: 1, and 1 Tim. 5: 17. Now this theory we pronounce more novel than Dr. Miller's theory; contrary to our and all other standards; and to Rutherford, Gillespie, and every other standard writer. Dr. Miller received and adopted Neander's theory, that in the beginning the term presbyter was generically applied to all officers, but that portion of his theory which led him, and these theorists, to their several results he *did not* adopt but reject. Dr. Miller did probably adopt imposition of hands in ordaining elders from Owen, and Dr. Miller did introduce weakness into his theory by adopting the generic or appellative sense of presbyter as including elders *and* ministers—not elders alone, as this theory which *identifies* the two, affirms. This we shall probably illustrate in some contradictions found in Dr. Miller's works. But with this exception, Dr. Miller held to the views of our standards and differed in this and in every other essential point from this theory.

But we must close, and we do so by observing that as an Irishman, we have a native born right and peculiar prerogative to blunder. But if all our blunders are like those now reviewed and in our reply to Dr. Dabney, we caution all men not to trespass upon or handle them, or else they may prove blunderbusses and burst with destructive explosion in their hands.

T. S.

## VALEDICTORY ON THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW FOR JANUARY, 1861.

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*Apology—Reasons for delay—Leading purpose of the Review—Preliminary remarks—Dr. Hodge's note to my article—Our many faults and defects and malversations—Prelacy and Presbytery distinguished—Different orders of officers not Prelacy, but different ranks of one order—The use of Presbyter—Calvin—Calvin's distinction not the new theory—What this theory is—The Irish Book of Discipline misunderstood\*—Ministers & Elders not representatives of the same church or in the same sense†—What human authorities can prove—Principal Hill—The Westminster Assembly and Standards—Calderwood—Gillespie—Rutherford.*

MESSRS EDITORS AND READERS: I really thought I had done, but as the nature of the article in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for January requires, for your sakes and my own, some vindication of my authorities, that is of *some five out of perhaps a hundred*, I will avail myself, with your permission, of an Irishman's privilege, of adding a postscript to his letter as long as the letter itself.

This we should have done sooner had we not been called off on important business, to hold earnest colloquy with our Northern friends, respecting Southern rights and institutions. Having discharged that mission, I will close the Eldership account unless it shall be made to appear hereafter that I have overlooked some unsettled accounts.

### DR. HODGE'S NOTE IN REPERTORY.

The leading purpose of the article in question is by a *coup de main* to cut off the whole power of my arguments by destroying my credibility as a witness. An interpretation is put on Dr. Hodge's note to my articles which it manifestly was not intended to bear. It was simply designed to propitiate Dr. Miller's personal friends, and avoid personal controversy with others. It had my approval before publication, when I reported myself to be a knight-errant who fought on his own responsibility and involved no one in his combats. Much is said about our incapacity, (831) superficiality, (850-853) ignorance, perversion, all of which we will throw in gratis to any one, who chooses to pick it up. The controversy has been narrowed down to our Standards, and to facts so plain, that the way-



faring man, though a fool, need not err, and we have no disposition to interpret any thing Dr. Adger may say as meant offensively, or as meaning one tittle of what its language imports.

#### PRELIMINARY—PRELACY AND PRESBYTERY DISTINGUISHED.

It is important to remark *first*, that the distinction between Prelacy and Presbytery is not found in their views about officers of the church, but about *ministers* of the church. The Reformers and the Presbyterian church always contend for only one order of ministers, and for parity among them, Prelacy contends for at least three orders of ministers, among whom there is a disparity and subordination, the prelate being of a superior order and having authority over the lower clergy. No Presbyterian Standards known to us, ever taught that there is but one order of church officers, or parity among them. This would make one order or genus, and three species, and would put deacons on a parity with ministers and elders. Our standards make three orders of "officers of the church," 1. *Ministers*, who singly and separately possess *their* peculiar "power of order," and *jointly* the power of jurisdiction; 2. *Ruling Elders*, who possess the joint power of jurisdiction only, and 3. *Deacons*, who possess the power of distribution, and are styled in Ch. xiii both "officers of the church" and "ecclesiastical rulers;" and each of these three are said to have "their *respective* offices."

2. The real question in this controversy is therefore essentially distinct from the prelatic theory of different orders of *Ministry* and relates to different orders of officers who do not possess the ministerial "power of order," and especially to the nature and name of ruling elder. We affirm, *with* "our venerable standards," that the ministry is an order and an office *by itself*, "the sacred office," and "the holy office," and the *FIRST* in the church for dignity and usefulness. The minister is not nominated or elected to office by the people, but one who having a call from God presents himself not to session, nor to the people, but to Presbytery, by whom he is examined, and after an education directed by it, is again fully and finally examined and licensed. This one and only order of ministers we affirm to be thus essentially distinct from ruling elders, who *are* nominated to the people, and *elected* or *rejected* by them, to be their representative in exercising the power of jurisdiction "*in conjunction* with pastors or ministers." In the very nature of things therefore the ruling elder is posterior in time, and is chosen to act *in conjunction with* the minister in exercising the power of jurisdiction, only he is *subordinate* in order and office to the minister. This we have seen Dr. Miller ex-

PLICITLY and repeatedly affirm. The theory of Dr. Adger, Dr. Thornwell, &c., which makes such subordination "a degradation of the office of the ruling elder to a lower order than that of the minister of the word, and thoroughly Prelatic," evidently has no meaning except by making ruling elders and ministers both *ONE order of ministers*. For there can be no *Prelacy* in teaching that an order of *officers*, chosen by the people to represent them in exercising the power of jurisdiction "in *conjunction with ministers*," are not ministers, but are different from, and subordinated to ministers. This theory therefore which makes elders and ministers "co-ordinate species" of one genus, which is that of "ruler" and not MINISTER, is manifestly different from our standards and from Dr. Miller, and is novel.

3. The only other point we will notice as necessary to understand our positions is the application of presbyter as a title of office. On this point we hold that in its *full, official* sense in scripture, and in our standards, and in those of the church of Scotland, which are those of the Westminster Assembly, the term presbyter is confined to ministers, but that there is "a *large*" or *general* sense, in which it may be applied to ruling elders and even to deacons. This, we think, we have made undeniably evident. As it regards our standards, *the utmost that can be alleged* is that after *formally teaching* that ministers are called presbyters because it is their *duty* to rule the church well, it teaches that elders were commonly so called ruling elders by the reformers, because they are representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government (or rule) and discipline, *in conjunction with* pastors or ministers.

#### CALVIN AND THE NEW THEORY.

That Calvin and those after him did theoretically and occasionally so use the term, we have always admitted. *But neither Calvin nor those after him did practically, generally or ecclesiastically so employ it.* Four passages are indeed produced from Calvin out of multitudes of an opposite tenor. And what do even these affirm? They give Calvin's opinion that "those who were chosen as *censors* were CALLED presbyters and that THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PRESBYTERS."

BUT THIS IS NOT THE NEW THEORY. This theory teaches: 1. That there is only one order of presbyters and that these are ruling elders. 2. That wherever the terms presbyter, bishop, overseer, and pastor, occur in the New Testament they refer to ruling elders. 3. That the term presbyter "as a title of office means a ruler *and nothing more than ruler*," and is not applicable to preachers as ministers of the word. 4. That ministers become presbyters by "a charisma or gift that comes to be

superadded to certain of the rulers," and that ministers, even with this gift, *if not already ruling elders*, must be somehow or other, made ruling elders. 5. "The minister sustains *precisely* the same relation to the church with the ruling elder." "Both are clergymen and both laymen." "They are both *in the same sense*, though not to the same degree, representatives of the people," (p. 792, 793 of Rev.)\* 6. Ruling elders have a right, and ought to unite in the imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers. 7. Ruling elders ought to be ordained in the same manner as ministers are, that is by the parochial or general presbytery.†

\*The argument on this point we regard as sophistical. Its middle term is used in two senses. Ministers are representatives of the church, and so are ruling elders, and therefore ruling elders and ministers are, *in the same sense* representatives of the church. This is true, but not of the CHURCH in the SAME sense. 1. Ministers represent the church Catholic and not the Presbyterian or any particular church, and are therefore ministers any where and every where, and among all denominations are so recognized. Elders have relation to a particular Presbyterian church, and cannot act in another without a new election. 2. Ministers at no age represent and act for a particular church until by special contract and installation they become pastors. 3. As ministers can perform all their functions, and act as rulers also in all church courts, and are distinct from elders in the whole power of order, they do not represent "the people," nor are "they chosen by them," "in the same sense," as elders. 4. In the sense in which this theory makes ministers and elders alike *clergy*—women, children and infants in the womb are clergy, that is, chosen, elect, saints. But this is neither the word clergy nor the thing. By the same reasoning all christians and all elders are and ought to be ministers. Now the term clergy has a meaning and usage just as established as that of minister, and refers to that power of order which a minister possesses and which a private christian does not possess. Matthias was chosen by lot out of believers, all of whom were chosen in the sense of Dr. T., and being ordained he possessed the power of order and was in an emphatic sense a *cleroid* or lot-chosen man, and hence the term clergyman, who by established use and definition, is one ordained to the ministry, which an elder manifestly is not. 5. The minister when ordained ceases to be a member of any particular church and is responsible to presbytery, whereas an elder remains a member. 6. The minister cannot be tried by session which an elder can. It is neither Presbyterian nor scriptural therefore to make their relations to the church the same.

†Dr. Thornwell (See *Review*, p. 797) has *entirely* misapprehended the Constitution and Discipline of the church in Ireland. In Sect. 3. it defines the extraordinary and ordinary officers in the church, and the ordinary and perpetual "are called (1.) bishops or presbyters. (2.) ruling elders, and (3.) deacons." (p. 5.) In Sect. 4. it treats of the first that is of "preachers of the gospel," under the heading of "bishops, presbyters, pastors, teachers, ministers, commonly called CLERGY." In defining these several names of preachers it says, "AS IT IS REQUIRED that he be grave and prudent in guiding and GOVERNING the family of Christ, he is THEREFORE termed PRESBYTER or elder." (p. 5. 6.) In chap. iii: (*not iv*) § 52, Dr. T. mistakes the Clerk of *Presbytery* for the Clerk of *Session*, which are carefully distinguished in Sect. 10, p. 11. "After public appointment (by the minister, that is by interrogation concerning the soundness of his religious principles, for the satisfaction of the congregation and "by prayer," only. see first paragraph.) his name shall be returned (*officially sent*) to the PRESBYTERY-Clerk, who shall, by order of PRESBYTERY, register it in the PRESBYTERY book, and give a certificate of entry to the SESSION to which said elder belongs," (p. 15.) The Book therefore teaches *just the reverse* of what he represents it as teaching. "Every regularly appointed teacher, pastor or minister was an Apostolical PRESBYTER, and every Presbyter laboring in word and doctrine was the Apostolical Bishop or Overseer." (P. 6.)

This then is the theory which we pronounce novel and revolutionary, and not to be sustained by Calvin, Knox, the Books of Discipline, Gillespie or any other standard ancient writer known to us. Of course, if former statements and views are abandoned we rejoice.

#### WHAT AUTHORITIES CAN PROVE.

The *Review* devotes much time to prove that human authority cannot make any thing true, or of divine right, and in this we are perfectly agreed. Divine authority must rest upon divine testimony, and that can be found only in the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

BUT HUMAN AUTHORITY MAY AND DOES as Dr. Cunningham is quoted as saying, "BEAR DIRECTLY and CONCLUSIVELY" upon the ESTABLISHMENT OF WHAT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAS DRAWN FROM SCRIPTURE AS TO "the great principles of our ecclesiastical polity which the question at issue involves," (p. 832.) And these theorists shew their appreciation of such authority by the emphasis put upon even two or three passages from Calvin, and a sentence from the Irish church Discipline, and even a *seeming* approval of the Second Book of Discipline, Rutherford, Gillespie, &c., though in contrariety to their general teaching and to the *real* meaning of their words. And thus also even John A. Lasco and the Bohemians are to outweigh in evidence all the unenlightened perverted churches of the Reformation.

#### PRINCIPAL HILL.

A second object of the article in question is to destroy the character of authorities quoted as such by me. I quoted Principal Hill's view of the constitution of the church of Scotland and the Practice of the several Judicatories of the church of Scotland, which is an enlargement of part of that work, by his son Alexander Hill, D. D., (6th ed. Edinb. 1859,) as standard authorities on any constitutional question, and as proving that "LAY-elders" and ministers are therefore regarded as *laymen* in the church of Scotland, *while being spiritual officers and rulers*, co-ordinate with ministers in the power of jurisdiction.

Dr. Adger would destroy this authority by telling us that Principal Hill was a Moderate, a supporter of patronage, and an opposer of church collections for Foreign Mission—in all which he was very naughty, and to be withstood to the face for he is verily to be blamed. But Adam Smith is an authority on Political Economy, and Robertson on History, and Blair on Rhetoric, and Burns and Logan as poets, though all were Moderates. And I submit that Dr. Hill's Theory is an admirably clear, candid and impartial Text Book, and that his "View" and "Practice" of "The church of Scotland" are, as is said in



the Preface to the last edition, "AN AUTHORITY OF THE HIGHEST KIND." Mr. Forbes in his analogous work, "A Digest of the Procedure of the Free church," bases it upon "the want of some Manual similar to that of Dr. Hill, adapted to the Free church," and says, "In preparing it, in addition to THE WELL KNOWN STANDARD VOLUME OF DR. HILL."

#### WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND STANDARDS.

3. The *Review* makes a most parricidal and unnatural effort to damage the character and weighty authority of the Westminster standards except on doctrinal points. "Great and good, and thoroughly enlightened as to doctrinal theology, *but not so enlightened* nor ORTHODOX as to church government." "And for a good deal of such miserable Prelatic stuff, *the authority* OF SUCH A BODY AS THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY is to be thrust upon us." (p. 856.) Hear that, ye churches of Scotland, Ireland and America and of the world over, of every Presbyterian name, family and consanguinity, in whose Confession of Faith that Form is embodied as equally with it authorized and appointed. Hear it, ye fathers and founders of the Presbyterian church in these United States by whom that Form was adopted and kept in use until in 1789 our present Form, *based upon it*, was adopted!

Now we submit: 1. That whenever these standards can be quoted by these writers in support of any position, they are so. 2. Doctrine enters into the constitutional principles of government as well as theology, and as such they were examined and discussed and sustained by scriptural proofs by the Assembly. 3. The church of Scotland sent eleven commissioners to it. 4. The church of Scotland in 1645, ratified and adopted that Form of Government separately from the Confession as its own. 5. In doing this the church of Scotland specify two points, not bearing at all on the Elder questions, on which, and on which alone, they reserve the right of further discussion. (See in their Conf. of Faith, p. 384.) 6. In ratifying it they say, "after mature deliberation, and after calling upon and warning of all who have any exceptions, doth agree to and approve the propositions afore mentioned, touching KIRK GOVERNMENT AND ORDINATION," &c. 7. In 1707, the church of Scotland passed an act which recites the words of this Form of Government "and it is also agreeable to and warranted by the word of God that some others be church governors, (*not Ruling Elders,*) to join with the ministers of the word," &c. (Padovan B. 1 title). 8. In 1649, the church of Scotland called these same persons "the representatives of that congregation," (Do. p. 189.) 9. In ratifying this Form the church of Scotland refers to both the *First* and *Second Book of Discipline* as the previous basis of

her polity. (See Conf. of F. p. 384.) The former of which required yearly election as necessary in order "to suffer none to usurp perpetual domination over the kirk." It made it the duty of deacons "to assist the assembly in judgment, and they may read publicly, if required," and it made "Elders and Deacons judges of other men's manners." Now this says Irving, (Confession of Faith of ch. of Scot, p. cix.) "was the original constitution of the Scottish church," and the Second Book was prepared "not with a view of superceding but of perfecting it." (cxvi.) 10. Dr. Baird in his able article in the same number of the *Review* (p. 752,) says, "For more than two hundred years the church of Scotland has reverently preserved and constantly adhered to the Westminster standards without alteration and without any attempt to affect any change whatsoever."

It follows therefore that the theory of Dr. Adger & Co., on the eldership which is admitted to be contrary to these standards is novel and is contrary to that of the church of Scotland and of our Fathers.

#### THE BELGIC CHURCHES IN LONDON.

Dr. Adger corrects Dr. Miller for saying that "the Reformers *unanimously* discarded imposition of hands in the ordination of elders," and refers to John A. Lasco and his three or four gleanings of different kinds of churches of which he was constituted bishop and of which afterwards bishop Grendal was elected bishop on A. Lasco's expulsion from England. Dr. Miller knew perhaps that he was not entitled to be ranked among reformers, and the very unmeasured and unwarrantable advice was given to review our studies and not misunderstand or misrepresent Dr. Miller is too needful at home to be even loaned out to any body.

#### SECOND BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

In this "most famous testimony," the church of Scotland "DOES UNDOUBTEDLY," says Dr. A., "deliver herself, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD." Let all the people say Amen. In all the praises of it we concur. On this Book and Dr. Adger's use of it, and of our statements concerning it, I remark: 1. That this Book is no more a present *ecclesiastical* standard of the church of Scotland than the First Book. Both were alike established in the adoption of the Westminster Form of Government. (See Conf. of F. as above.) Both are embodied in Pardovan's Collection and by Irving, Dunlap and Hetherington. Both therefore must be taken together as we have put them, and both are in direct conflict with the new theory. 2. As to the quotations attributed to us by Dr. A., the first is a

*perversion*, and the next two are *not found* in either place referred to, and *were never*, we think, used by us to express the views of that Book. In the first quotation (Repert. 1860, p. 203.) "Thus plainly does this fundamental constitution confine the term presbyter (*or elder*) in its strict official sense, to ministers, and apply it only in its LARGE sense to those whose proper name is governor or ruler." Dr. Adger omitted all in italics. 3. Now the original words from chapter ii are, "The word *elder* in the scripture sometimes is the name of age, sometime of office. When it is the name of an office, sometimes it is taken largely, comprehending AS WELL the Pastors and Doctors, as them who are called seniors or elders. In THIS our division, WE CALL THEM elders whom THE APOSTLES CALL presidents or governors." Here it is declared, (1.) That even when the term presbyter is used officially it is SOMETIMES, not ALWAYS *as this theory teaches*, used in a LARGE sense so as to comprehend both ministers and elders," which this theory denies by confining it to rulers. (2.) This implies that as the term presbyter is only *sometimes* used in this large sense it is GENERALLY used in a STRICT sense for ministers only. And that it had taught in ch. iv, "Of the Pastors or Ministers."\* These are called "Presbyters or Seniors for the gravity in manners which they ought to have in taking care of the spiritual government which ought to be most dear to them," whereas this theory denies that ministers are as such, presbyters at all, and also that as such they are rulers or governors. But (3.) it is here taught, in direct contrariety to this theory that the apostles did not call these *elders* by that name, but by the name of "presidents or governors." (4.) The name of elder is not therefore of apostolical usage, but modern. "WE CALL them elders," not ruling elders which came into use much later

5. This Book adopts our opinion of the rotation of elders in office. The First Book makes their *annual* election essential. 6. The name of *Elder* even was not fixed at that time, for in ch. vii it has to be explained "*such, as we commonly call elders.*" 7. This Book limits the term bishop, in accordance with its strict use of *presbyter*, to ministers. "As to bishops, if the name be *properly* taken, they are all one with the ministers as before was declared." (ch. xi: 9.) 8. It does not require a session or bench of elders in every church, but "*one or more in every congregation, but NOT an assembly of elders in every PARTICULAR KIRK, BUT ONLY in towns,*" &c., (ch. xii: 5.) The Westminster Form has *precisely* this doctrine. 9. According to this Book elders *were elected by the session with consent* of the congregation, that is none opposing. 10. There

\*This theory makes pastors elders, and the elder's office the pastoral office.

is no mention in this Book of a church session distinct from a Presbytery, (See Irving p. cxxi.) Now can any of our readers "plainly see" in this Book as Dr. Adger does, "that very theory of the eldership now called the new theory." If he does, his eye sight must be crossed or he must be like the Irishman who could see a thing just as well if it wasn't there as if it was; if he does, "undoubtedly however it is according to the word of God" and our theory.

#### CALDERWOOD.

"Stout old Calderwood, the fearless and uncompromising Calderwood, the hater of Prelacy in all its forms," is another witness whom we have "made to favor these Prelatic notions, by misquoting and misrepresenting him." Prelacy excludes the laity from any rule in the church and so does this new theory. Prelacy makes ruling and the ruler, the fundamental order in the church, and so does this theory. Prelacy makes preaching merely a gift, or work, or function which may or may not attach to and be exercised by rulers, and so does this theory. Prelacy divides the one order of clerical rulers into classes, which this theory also does. Prelacy opposes one order, and parity of *ministers*, "in conjunction with representatives of the people, chosen by them to assist in government and discipline, an order of church officers who are not clergy, nor ordained as the clergy are," and so does this theory. On all these points however, and on every point which can be regarded as distinctive of Prelacy, our theory and good stout old Calderwood stand opposed to it.

And to prove this, we need hardly bother with our quotations but confine ourselves to what Dr. A. has produced, although it is limited to the single point of the ordination of elders. He is careful not to tell us that he believed in the THREE orders of church officers and not one; that he "put a difference between the names of office-bearers in the New Testament, never calling the *inferior* by the name of the *superior*," and that "the PASTOR with his fellow PRESBYTERS is put in trust with the preaching of the word &c. and hath received also of Christ the power of ordination of pastors, where presbytery can be no other thing but the persons or company of pastors laying on their hands," (Pastor and Prelate Ch. 1, 1 and 6.)

But in the selection given by Dr. A., Calderwood argues against the Romish dogma that ordination is a sacrament. It is not to be understood except as thus considered. Like the early reformers, he goes therefore to the extreme on the subject of ordination, in order to meet the objection founded upon the fact that ruling elders were neither ordained by imposition of hands, nor permitted to unite in imposition of hands. In this (see Rev. p. 842,) he says. 1. "We do not hold that the



right of laying on of hands can belong to lay elders . . . right and the laws permit no layman to impose hands. 2 As to the word *clergy* in *that* sense (*of ministers or preachers*) we do not employ it. 3. He only claims that the office of the *seniors* is sacred, and to be numbered *among* the administrations God has appointed." 4. Having stated that imposition of hands is a thing indifferent, that "even laymen, that is private believers in the church can impose hands," that it was "a familiar rite among the Hebrews which the apostles adopted as a custom," and that it was "a simple familiar gesture of prayer," he says, "that for *the sake of signifying consent* the seniors also impose hands, IF it shall seem necessary, *but to dedicate and consecrate with prayers* is SOLELY for the minister. 5. He says, "I concede that only *that imposition of hands is reserved to the pastor or teaching presbyter* which is conjoined with prayers and benedictions." 6. After affirming again that it is only in sign of consent and assistance, ruling elders MAY also impose hands," he argues that even though they do not impose hands, they may constitute a part of presbytery, "for the imposition of hands might be called the imposition of the hands of presbytery, *although not all and singular of presbytery should have the power of imposing hands.*"

Calderwood in short, thought, 1. That elders might impose hands in ordination, if it is understood to mean nothing more than a form of expressing consent, but 2. That as a matter of *fact*, they *never* in Scotland had done it, and 3. As a matter of doctrine, that as an act of dedicating to an office, *with prayers imposition of hands* is *exclusively* a ministerial act, "is only for the minister;" all which is contrary to the new theory and in perfect accordance with our representations.

#### GILLESPIE.

The testimony of Gillespie is very important as he was the ablest representative of the church of Scotland in the Westminster Assembly, and as he concurred in the adoption, by that church, of the Form of Government of the Westminster Assembly in 1645, we must believe that any private views different from them, to be found in his works published in 1641 and 1642, and chiefly on the Erastian controversy, were conformed to it. The same is true also of Rutherford. The assertion of the divine right of ecclesiastical government in the hands of spiritual officers instituted by Christ is therefore his primary object. In the passage, quoted by Dr. A. from chap. xiv, not xii, Gillespie shows that in the church of Scotland, elders were ordained as well as ministers, BUT NOT IN THE SAME WAY, not by the same body, not by the session jointly, but by the minister, and without imposition of hands, in all of which points he

gives judgment against this theory and in our favor. "Howbeit, he says, in Scotland imposition of hands is not used in the ordination of ruling elders as it is in the ordination of preaching elders." After the election of elders (by session) with the notice and consent of the whole church, there followeth with us a public designation and an authoritative or protestative mission," &c., just as it is done to this day in Scotland and else where.

In the very next words in the same chapter he says, "as for the maintenance or *continuance* of the office of ruling elders, we love not unnecessary multiplication of questions, *let every church do herein what they find most convenient*," and he goes on to give reasons.

Gillespie held our views in opposition to this theory on every point essential. 1. He held in this same work, that elders are called rulers not because they alone are ex-officio rulers. "Pastors rule the church *even as they do*," but they do more, "whereas the elders have *no other* employment which can give them a designation *except the ruling* of the church only," (p. 10.) 2. Elders are a lower order of officers than ministers. He compares them to factors or regents among Romanists, who are, he says, "among the lowest ranks of their officers, so that they need not stumble when they call their elders ruling elders," (p. 11.) 3. He makes three sorts of elders, all of whom had voice in their presbyteries and whom he finds in the words, doctrine and ruling of 1 Tim. 5: 17. 4. He makes four ordinary and perpetual sorts, or orders, of officers in the church, (p. 11.) 5. Ministers by "their power of order" may *without commission from any presbytery or assembly* of the church preach, administer sacraments, baptise, marry, &c., (p. 12.) They cannot therefore in any proper sense, be representatives of the people. 6. And what is contrary to the *fundamental* and last analysis of the new theory, *ruling and rulers*, Gillespie teaches as we, *without an attempted reply*, have made the very essence of this controversy, nor that "THE POWER OF ORDER" (*and not that of jurisdiction*) IS THE RADICAL AND FUNDAMENTAL POWER and maketh ministers susceptible of the power of jurisdiction, (p. 12.) 7. The power of order therefore, is not as this theory teaches, a *gift* or function super-added to certain rulers. 7. All jurisdiction is not joint, for ordination, which he makes such, is not a joint work in its execution, but, "pastors alone can exercise some acts of jurisdiction as imposition of hands," &c., (p. 12.)

8. "There is a power of order, peculiar to the elder," (p. 13.) who is therefore of an ORDER different from the minister. 9. He argues that ruling elders are not the independent representatives of the people, as Dr. Thornwell and this theory allege.

"What power have the people?" asks Dr. Thornwell. Gillespie, one of the "purest presbyterian confessors" answers: (1.) by the distinction between power and the *exercise* of power the former being in "the whole congregation as *principium quod* and in the eldership alone as *principium quo*." The power is in the collective body but the representatives exercise it. (2.) He bases this divinely instituted exercise of power upon the unfitness of most of the people and upon impracticability. (3.) He says "it is a question controverted and to this day" whether in the church of Corinth the power of ex-communication *in actu primo seu quo ad esse* did belong to the collective body of the church or not." "Howbeit" he adds "the execution and final act of that high censure was to be with *the consent*, and *in the presence* of the congregation," (p. 39, 40, 41.) (4.) He says it may be that in the formation of a church, the power of election, "*even if election were an act of authority and jurisdiction*" as assuredly by the very nature of representative government it must be, is in the people in Scotland however; "the election of officers belongeth to the (parochial) presbytery, to the pastor and elders," a close corporation and tyrannical despotism as this theory tells us according to "our own venerable standards" however, *this power of jurisdiction is given to the people*. (5.) He answers further by quoting Paget, "that matters of censure are *first* propounded to the *whole* church and their prayers and consent required." (6.) He quotes from a Confession these words "yet so that in matters of weight *the whole congregation* do first understand thereof before anything be finished, and the final act be done in the presence of the whole congregation, and also that they (the whole congregation) do not manifestly dissent therefrom." "We are heartily content," adds Gillespie, that congregations do fully enjoy all the christian liberty which is here pleaded for," (p. 41.)

10. Gillespie maintains, *out and out*, our opinion that the apostolic churches were not divided into parishes and had no need of church sessions but were governed by a common body. (p. 44.)

11. Gillespie believed in "*general rules*" and not in "constitutive" which would necessarily *include* and *limit* ALL that *constitute* or make up the divinely instituted order and officers and courts of the church. Gillespie therefore and all other "pure confessors," claim for the church the power of "determining conform" to *the general light of nature, and the general rules of God*, the several sorts of these assemblies which are not particularly determined by scripture," and that these, *when so determined* "are God's own ordinances *mixedly* though not merely," (p. 52, 53.)

12. He admits also that there may not have been any elder-ship in the churches mentioned in Acts 14, (Miscellany Ques. p. 6.) This will explain also Phil. 1: 1.

The reader will now see who had studied Gillespie most thoroughly and reported him most candidly. He is altogether on our side except in using the term presbyter in a *large* as well as a *limited* and strict official sense. As it regards his repudiation of the Romish application to elders in an invidious sense of the term *laical* and *laics*, to deny the *official ecclesiastical* character of elders as ordained officers in the church, we have repeatedly expressed our perfect concurrence.

#### RUTHERFORD.

Rutherford was also a Scotch Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, and like Gillespie published works while in London. His views are, I think, perfectly concurrent with those of Gillespie. In the quotation made by Dr. Adger he affirms in answer to the fact stated that "your ruling elders *do not give* IMPOSITION OF HANDS," "if they judicially consent to imposition of hands it is sufficient," and hence, "he as a *part* of the presbytery" unites judicially and *through the ministers* in imposing hands.

Rutherford teaches that the term presbyter does apply *officially and fully* to ministers and is not therefore confined, as this theory confines it, to elders.

He denies that "elder or presbyter, *in general*, and a bishop are the same," that is they are only synonymous when applied to *ministers*, for there are not "teaching and ruling bishops;" see Due Right of Presb., p. 150 and 151.\*

He denies that Acts 20: 28 and Titus refer to elders, "for they be all preaching elders," (p. 150 and 151.)

He denies that the office, character, qualifications and duties of elders are as this theory affirms, prescribed in 1 Tim. 3, in Tit. 2, Eph. 4, and Phil. 1: 1.

He denies that the office is proved by any other passages than those which these theories pronounce utterly insufficient, (p. 151 and 153,) that is 1 Tim. 5: 17, Rom. 12: 4, and 1 Cor. 12: 28, and Dr. Dabney, &c.

"The ruling elder is *the assistant officer* to help the preaching elder, and BOTH of them are to *rule* the house of God," (p. 152.)

"The ruling elder doth *solum regit*, doth *only* govern," *sed non solus regit*, but he doth not govern *alone*, but with "the pastor and doctor."

\*His works are paged all wrong.



"The pastor being once ordained pastor may use the keys *independently*, for he may preach mercy and wrath not waiting for the churches, suffrages," (p. 154.)

"But the power of the keys in censures, for binding and loosing, is given to no one mortal man, but to the *church*, both as to the *subject* and *object*," (p. 154.)

I have now gone through all the authorities, out of very many, which have been questioned, and I leave to the reader an impartial judgment and to Dr. Adger all the application and benefit of his own advice and censures, and may we never be further apart nor worse enemies than we are. T. S.

CHARLESTON, March, 1861.

## THE THEORY OF DR. MILLER, DR. HODGE AND THE REPERTORY CONTRASTED WITH THE THEORY OF DR. ADGER, THE SOUTH- ERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, &c.

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THE EFFORT HAS BEEN STRENUOUSLY MADE BY DR. DABNEY, in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, and by the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, and the *Southern Presbyterian*, to lead our ministers, ruling elders, and people to believe that the theory of Dr. Hodge and of Dr. Smyth in the *Repertory* are not that so ably maintained by Dr. Miller, while their theory is, on the contrary, the theory of Dr. Miller. Thus in a recent article in the *Southern Presbyterian*, it was positively affirmed that "the theory of Dr. Miller is the theory of Dr. Adger, as presented in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, but not the theory of Dr. Hodge and the *Biblical Repertory*."

I propose, therefore, as briefly as possible, to contrast them, and thus leave the reader to determine, who best understand Dr. Miller's views, and most nearly retain them, and whether it may not be wise to differ with Dr. Miller on *one single point*, and *that only in part*, and to uphold his views on every other, rather than lose sight altogether of both Dr. Miller and all the ancient land marks of our faith.

I. Dr. Miller taught that in every church completely organized there ought to be three classes or orders of officers. 1st. At least one teacher, elder, bishop, or pastor; 2d. A bench of ruling elders; 3d. Deacons. (*On Ruling Elders*, p. 28.)

Such is the theory of Dr. Hodge and the *Biblical Repertory*. Dr. Adger and the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, however, make one order of ruling elders, with two classes and deacons as helps.

II. According to Dr. Miller, Dr. Hodge, and the *Repertory*, the ministry is an office, and "the sacred office" (Letters, p. 215,) as our standards style it, and "holy office." (See Confession of Faith, pp. 408, 431, 432, 433, 439, 441, 443.) According to this theory it is a function superadded to certain of the one order or office of the rulers.

II. Dr. Miller taught, and the *Repertory* teaches that in its full and strict official sense, "the Apostles gave the name of elder, that is presbyter, to the pastors and rulers of the churches they organized. (*Chr. Min.*, p. 53, &c.) According to this theory "the elder or presbyter, as a title of office, means a ruler,

and *nothing more* than a ruler," and "is not applicable to preachers as ministers of the word."

IV. Dr. Miller taught, and Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory* teach, that the ministry is the primary and fundamental office in the Church—"the first to minister in the word and doctrine, &c.; the second to ASSIST in the government and inspection of the Church." (*Ruling Eld.* p. 29.) This theory, however, denies that presbyter and preacher were originally synonymous, but views preaching as a function which can be superadded to certain of the rulers."

V. Dr. Miller, and Dr. Hodge, and the *Repertory* teach that rule or government is an inclusive necessary part of the ministerial office, and that elders "are appointed to ASSIST in governing the Church." (*Chr. Min.* p. 65, &c.) This theory, however, "makes the essence of the presbyterate to be ruling," and that it is only as *ruling* elders or presbyters that ministers can rule at all, or sit in any Church court.

VI. Dr. Miller taught, and so have Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory*, that bearing rule in the Church is unequivocally less honourable than preaching—(p. 65.) This theory, on the contrary, teaches (*S. P. Rev.* 1859, p. 173) that "preachers or teachers, *as such*, have no place at all in our church courts. They are assemblies of ruling elders, many of whom have the superadded charisma of preaching."

VII. Dr. Miller, and Dr. Hodge, and the *Repertory*, agree in teaching, as Dr. Miller does in his "Christian Ministry," p. 27, that there is but ONE ORDER of ministers of the gospel—(of course there is *one order* of ministers,) and that every presbyter who is, &c., "is to all intents and purposes, and in the sense of Scripture and of the Primitive Church, a bishop, having a right, in company with others his equals, to ordain, and perform every service pertaining to the episcopal *office*. In a word, we believe that the office of the gospel ministry is one, and that the New Testament does not admit of grades and orders in that office." Again, on p. 44:—"Christ gave but one commission for the office of the ministry, and that this office, of course, is not threefold, but one." Christ, by his commission, therefore, instituted long before elders or deacons were appointed, the one order or office of the ministry, who are called synonymously presbyters and bishops.

This theory, however, rejects any order or office of ministers, and makes them a class of rulers. It denies that ministers are properly presbyters. It denies that there is "one order" commissioned by Christ as a ministry. It denies that ministers are a distinct order from ruling elders, and that ruling elders are a distinct order from ministers. Ruling elders, it affirms, are

clergy in the *same sense*, and *as fully* as ministers are. There is not *one* order of ministers, and another of ruling elders.

Dr. Miller, however, here and elsewhere, teaches all that Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory* teach about ruling elders not being clergy, which, as they have stated in words, is simply that they are not clergymen, but are distinct from the clergy—not in orders. In any invidious sense, ruling elders are *not* laity. In other words, ruling elders, as Dr. Miller teaches, “are *distinct and separate from* the one order of the ministry, and in common, universal language, this is all that the term *clergy* means. It is idle words, therefore, to controvert this distinction, as it would necessitate some other.” (*Bib. Repert.* July, 1860, pp. 462, 463, 469.) Again—“Ruling elders and deacons, though laymen, are not incumbents of a lay office, nor lay officers. They occupy a divinely instituted office, and are clothed by divine right with all the dignity and honour of ecclesiastical officers.” What more does Dr. Miller teach?

VIII. Dr. Miller not only held that the ministry was an order or office, and one order or office without any grades, and an order superior to the ruling elder, he held most unequivocally that there was also an office of the ruling eldership and of the deaconship; he held also that each of these offices had its appropriate functions or duties; and he protested against any mixture of offices as liable to very strong objections. (See “Ruling Elders,” p. 242, &c.)

Now in all this Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory* agree with Dr. Miller, and Dr. Adger and the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, &c., totally differ from him.

IX. Dr. Miller held that the term presbyter is used in the New Testament in a *generic* sense, so as to *include* both ministers and ruling elders, and primarily ministers. “Scriptural bishops were pastors of single congregations or presbyters.” (*Chr. Min.* 57.) In short, the title of bishop, as applied to ministers of the gospel, is given to those who are styled presbyters.” (*Chr. Min.* p. 58.) Where he again speaks of “the second order of *clergy*, in other words, presbyters strictly speaking is distinguished from bishops,” (on p. 60,) Dr. Miller calls *this* “the Presbyterian sense of the word presbyter.” (See also p. 61, 62.)

This theory, however, as represented in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, teaches that it is *only* as a *class of ruling elders* ministers are presbyters, the essence of which is ruling, and that the presbyter, as a title of office, means a ruler, and nothing more than a ruler. This, it is said, is clear beyond the possibility of a doubt. (*Southern Presbyterian Review*, 1848, p. 58, 60, 66.)



X. Dr. Miller elaborately proves that presbyters as presbyters, as ministers, as the so-called second order of clergy, are in Scripture clothed with all the power given for the government of the Church. The power of government in the Church is ascribed to presbyters in terms which cannot be rendered more plain and decisive. (*Chr. Min.* 65.) "All the elders were overseers and inspectors." "Let us attend," says Dr. Miller, (*ibid.* p. 61,) "to some of the powers vested in Christian ministers, and see whether the Scriptures do not ascribe them equally to presbyters and bishops."

This theory, as shown above, contradicts this positive teaching of Dr. Miller, and invests the power of government in the eldership, *from which it is derived*, to the ministry. "Descending to the elders, or presbyters, or bishops, or pastors of the New Testament, this view finds them always to be *rulers* in distinction from *teachers*." (*Southern Presbyterian Review*, p. 172.)

XI. Another point of divergence in this theory from that of Dr. Miller will be found in the assumption, "Scrutinizing carefully the testimonies of the apostolic fathers also, and of the Primitive Church, this view finds the presbyter or the elder in the early Church to be simply a ruler and a shepherd of Christ's flock." Now, the very utmost that Dr. Miller attempted to prove was that among the presbyters of the fathers some were probably ruling elders, and that they existed under other names.

XII. Another contrast between this theory and that of Dr. Miller is found in the appropriation to the ruling elder of the titles of pastor and shepherd, and even teacher, whereas he limits the generic titles to the terms bishop and presbyter; and by appropriating to *ruling elders* many passages which Dr. Miller would unquestionably limit to the ministry.

XIII. This theory adopts Neander's opinion that the Church was gradually developed under the apostles, one function after another being added as required, and *first the rulers*. It was ruling elders who met Paul at Miletus, and who were ordained in every city in distinction from teaching elders. "It denies," says Dr. Adger, "that presbyter and preacher were originally synonymous; but views preaching as a function—a charisma (or gift), as Neander expresses it, which came to be superadded to certain of the rulers. They had suitable talents, and so were chosen and called to that work." *South. Pres. Rev.* p. 172.

Now, in opposition to this theory, Dr. Miller taught "that as soon as we begin to read of the apostles *organizing* churches on the New Testament plan, we find bishops, elders, and deacons ordained in every church"—(*On Ruling Eldership*, p. 52)—and that by bishops he meant ministers is unquestionable,

by looking back, as the passage requires, to page 44, &c., where he says, "the names of the ministers of the gospel were the very same which belonged to the ministers in the synagogue—the angel of the Church and bishop." (See also p. 28, and *Christ. Min.* p. 26, &c.)

XIV. Dr. Miller taught, and so do Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory*, that the ministerial office is superior, and that of ruling elders inferior. (See *Chr. Min.* pp. 63, 65, 74.) In his work on ruling elders (p. 69), he calls the ministry "the highest office that Christ has instituted in his Church." This theory, however, makes preaching a *function of ruling elders*, and teaches that ruling elders are not only equally honourable, but are the one fundamental order of which ministers are a class, nay, that "it is as being a ruler we meet the minister in the *session*," &c. This theory admits "the ruling elder is inferior to the teacher in respect to the word and sacraments," but Dr. Miller calls the minister "the superior officer," and the ruling elder "an inferior officer," and so do our and all other standards teach.

XV. It is on this ground Dr. Miller taught, as do Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory*. "We deny the right of an inferior officer, (speaking of elders,) to lay on hands in the ordination of a superior officer." (*Chris. Min.*, p. 74.) This theory, however, claims that ruling elders are entitled to participate in all the acts in which any *Presbyter*, as such, can bear a part, including imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers.

XVI. Dr. Miller, as do Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory*, regarded the distinct superiority of the office of the ministry to be of such vital importance, that while objecting to the use of the words "clergy" and of "lay elders," he would have some definite terms employed to designate exclusively, and distinguish carefully, the one office from the other. (*Rul. Eld.*, pp. 209, 210.) This theory, on the contrary, claims for ruling elders every name given in the Scriptures to ministers, except, perhaps, preachers, and regards ruling elders as clergy *in the same sense* in which ministers are, and ministers representatives of the people in the same sense in which ruling elders are.

XVII. Dr. Miller taught that no form of government was in so rigorous a sense of divine right as to be essential to the being of a Church as is doctrine, while this theory claims, in some of its presentations, the same authority and divine right as for doctrine. Dr. Miller "had no zeal" about the use of the term "laity," and had no expectation of changing the universal use of the term to distinguish ministers, which he freely admits to have been universal from the earliest times, and instead of claiming divine right against any distinction between ruling elders and ministers, asserted a divine right for it, and a sacred obligation to observe it. (*Do.* pp. 211, 212.) What Dr. Mil-

ler contended for was that ruling elders are as *truly* spiritual officers, set apart by ordination of the session from the laity, which is fully admitted by all.

XVIII. In fine, Dr. Miller taught that the term *Presbyter* or *Elder* applied to those who were "confessedly teachers," but was also "used to designate a different class," but he did not believe "that the function of ruling was confined to this class of officers." On the contrary, both are *proestotes*, "that is rulers, the term elder in Scripture being a generic term, comprehending all who rule in the Church." (*Rul. Eld.*, pp. 68, 69.)

Now, even on this point, Dr. Adger and the *Southern Presbyterian Review's* theory do not agree with Dr. Miller, since it is denied that the term *Presbyter* applies properly to ministers as such at all; and it also denies that ruling pertains to ministers at all as such.

XIX. One further point of *vital* practical difference between the theory of Dr. Miller and that of Dr. Adger and the *Southern Presbyterian Review* is that the latter apply to ruling elders not only the *names* peculiarly appropriate to ministers, but also all the *qualifications* laid down for bishops, and all the *duties* and solemn responsibilities imposed upon them. It requires, in short, ruling elders to *BE* and to *DO* all and every thing which ministers ought to *BE* and ought to *DO*, except authoritative preaching and administration of the sacraments.

XX. Again, Dr. Adger says:—"Our Church is not governed by officers having only such powers as the people possess, or as the people bestow, and assembling to do only what the people might themselves do, or what the people have instructed them to do." Now, on this point Dr. Miller concurs with Dr. Hodge and the *Repertory*, whose views, however, are not here accurately expressed. In his work on *Ruling Elders* (p. 266), he quotes with approbation the decision of the Assembly of 1826, as follows:—"Ruling elders, as such, according to our Confession of Faith, Book I., on Government, Chap. V., are the representatives of the people, by whom they are chosen, for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; *that the discipline lawfully exercised by them is the discipline exercised through them by their constituents, in whose name and by whose authority they act in all that they do.*" "It is well known," he adds in a note, "that the General Assembly, in this clause of their judgment, did not mean to deny that ruling elders, in the *rightful* discharge of their duties, act in the name and by the authority of Christ. This great truth is plainly recognized in a preceding clause. But merely to say that they act as *the representatives*, and *ON BEHALF OF the members of the Church at large.*"

XXI. Once more. Dr. Adger, in order to excite prejudice against the writer in the *Repertory*, refers to an opinion\* formerly published and *still held* by him, on the ground of experience and expediency, which is equally consistent with either theory of the eldership as of divine right, viz., the expediency of allowing, as in the early Scotch Churches and Books of Discipline, in the Reformed Dutch Church, and in the Churches of France, rotation in the actual active service of the eldership, or a periodical appointment. The language of Dr. Adger is as unwarrantable in spirit as it is illogical in argument, irrelevant in evidence, and unfair in its averments. The above opinion, as Dr. Miller himself candidly exemplifies at length, (*Rul. Eld.* p. 271-274 inclusive,) is as old as Calvin and Knox, and the Churches and standards they moulded, and was practically embodied in the Church of Scotland, as it ever has been in the Churches named above; and Dr. Miller, *so far* from "repudiating" or objecting, actually embodies in his work on Ruling Elders this remarkable condemnation of this irrelevant and illogical assault. "The writer is here stating what is the actual constitution of the Presbyterian Church as to this point. *He does not suppose, however, that there is any infringement of Presbyterian principle in the annual elections of ruling elders, formerly practised in the Church of Scotland, and still practised in the Dutch and French Churches.* Where a Church is large, containing a sufficient number of grave, pious, and prudent members to furnish an advantageous rotation, and where the duties of the office are many and arduous, *it may not be without its advantages* to keep up some change of incumbency in this office."

"The Princeton of that day" did not, therefore, repudiate either the opinion or the doctrine of this "respected contributor." The writer's work, on the contrary, was substantially approved by Dr. A. Alexander, who adopted as his text-book the author's work on Presbytery, in which this view of the eldership is embodied, so that "the Princeton of that day" objected as little as, nay, less perhaps, than "the Princeton of this day."

XXII. Dr. Miller says (p. 212, *Rul. Eld.*.) "Let the class of officers in question be called ruling elders. Let ALL NECESSARY

\*That work "The Name, Nature, and Functions of Ruling Elders," offered *no other* theory of the Eldership than he has recently advanced. The author added a chapter, giving his opinion on the perpetuity of the office. He did not therefore specially notice that work in the *Repertory*, because it was his own, and because after an entirely fresh examination of the whole subject, he was now presenting the same doctrine, differing from Dr. Miller only on the *generic* use of the term Presbyterian, and only to some extent on that, since Dr. Miller would not call elders presbyters, but exclusively ruling elders, and we are quite willing so to name them, in the English form and generic use of the term, reserving exclusively to ministers, as our standards do, the official application of the Greek term Presbyter.



DISTINCTION BE MADE by saying ministers or pastors, ruling elders, deacons, and the laity or body of the people."

With this we have been and are satisfied. But these theorists are not. Ruling elders MUST be presbyters and bishops—(a term for *ministers*, the common use of which our standards emphatically urge as peculiarly expressive, and which ought not to be rejected)—or they are nothing. They must be by a divine right, as authoritatively as are the Bible and its system of doctrine—THE ONE PRIMARY FUNDAMENTAL ORDER, of which *preachers* (this is all that is left to ministers) are a class, or he is of no divine right at all. And this theory must be adopted, Dr. Miller to the contrary notwithstanding, or else Dr. Hodge is no Presbyterian, Dr. Smyth is repudiated, and "destroys the office of the eldership," and the *Repertory* is recreant to its ancient faith.

XXIII. One other point may be mentioned to show the antagonism between Dr. Miller's views and these theorists, and that is, the mode of electing elders. This, according to our standards, is left to the mode most approved and in use in each congregation severally. With this Dr. Miller entirely concurs—(see *Rul. Eld.*, p. 267)—where he points out the different modes adopted in different churches. He states that in the Church of Scotland, in many Presbyterian churches in the United States, in the Church of Holland, in many of the churches of the Reformed Dutch Church, in the Church of Geneva, and in the Protestant churches in France, the elders are chosen by the voice of the session, and ordained if no opposition is expressed; and although he prefers referring the choice, where it can conveniently be done, after due consultation and care, to the suffrages of the members of the church, nevertheless this plan of choosing has, he says, some real advantages. When wisely executed, it may be supposed likely to lead to a more calm, judicious, and happy choice than would probably result from a popular vote, especially when no consultation and understanding had taken place among the more grave, pious, and prudent of the church members; and, therefore, where this plan has been long in use, and unanimously acquiesced in, it had, perhaps, better not be changed.

Now, so antagonistic is this new theory, and so *purely* democratic is it, that even the nomination of ruling elders by an existing session is regarded as a close, self-perpetuating body; and "if they went but one little step further, and elected as well as nominated themselves, it would be complete. But I know only one session which has ventured to make and enforce a rule so unjust and tyrannical." (*South. Pres.*, Nov. 24, 1860.)

In conclusion, we remark that the importance of this controversy is manifest in its practical bearing on the office and char-

acter of the ministry. It forces upon us the question—Is the ministry a function, a work, or is it the holy and sacred office of the ministry as our standards, and the standard-bearers of our Church, in this and other lands, have always loved to call and to esteem it? By this theory it is no order—no office. “To regard the ministry as some sort of sacred class, or order, separate and distinct from the people, proceeds on that old and most mischievous error, that the ministry is a priesthood, *or something like it.*” “And it is utterly inconsistent with the nature and relations of the ministry, as I have always understood them. I have always supposed and believed that our ministers were *a part of the people themselves*, chosen by them, directly or indirectly, to fulfill certain duties, and not ceasing to be such after their induction into office. And I protest—with my whole soul and strength I protest—against any doctrine that makes a separate and sacred class or order out of them, any other than that.”

Again:—“*The very name by which ministers are commonly designated in the New Testament—‘presbyters,’ ‘elders,’—implies that they belong to the class and order of the people themselves.*”

The name of “clergyman” to distinguish a SACRED OFFICE, though the ministry is so called expressly in a number of places in our standards, is proof positive of hierarchical usurpation! Such is the language of the *Southern Presbyterian* within hearing of the *Review*. Now, this holy horror may be quieted, if it is borne in mind that “clergymen” are so called from the manner in which Matthias became numbered with the Apostles—“And they gave lots, *clerous*”—hence clergy, with the fact mentioned by us\* that the Church of Scotland, on two or three occasions, solemnly repudiated as a gross error, a mistake in printing this passage so as to make the ordination come from the people, and not from the ministers.

Now, as it regards both the ministry and the eldership, we confidently appeal to the consciousness of the Church by asking, whether it is not universally felt that ministers are, according to the word of God and the institution of Christ, an order and office separate and distinct from the body of the people, and also from the eldership?—whether the word *clergy*, or some other word, is not necessary to express the sense of this distinction?—and whether the ruling elder does not himself feel that he is a layman and not a minister—not a clergyman—not in “the holy office of the ministry?” (*Conf. of Faith*)—and whether, finally, the people do not intuitively look upon the

\*See “Richardson’s Dictionary,” and the similar use of the word in old translation of 1 Pet. v. 3.

elder as holding a very different office and relation from those of their minister?

The conclusion of the whole matter is this: Dr. Adger, and the theorists who agree with him, do not agree with the theory of Dr. Miller in any one particular as to the name, nature, and functions of the elder. This is true also of the writer on the subject in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*. Dr. Hodge, on the contrary, and the *Repertory*, agree with all Dr. Miller's teaching on the subject of ruling elders, except the one point of the *generic* use of the term presbyter, as including ruling elder.

The theory of Dr. Adger & Co. is not, therefore, the theory of Dr. Miller. It is different, inconsistent with, and even contrary to it. It is therefore clearly recent and novel, and can find no precedent in any Presbyterian standard, nor in any standard Presbyterian writer beyond their own eminent and highly-exalted copartnership.

But, enough; as Dr. Hodge testifies, "there was no man in the Church more opposed to this theory than that venerable man whose memory we have so much reason to cherish with affectionate reverence." (*Repert.* 1860, p. 561.)

FIAT JUSTITIA.

N. B.—This contrast is drawn up and published without any knowledge or co-operation on the part of Dr. Hodge.







THE OFFICE AND FUNCTIONS

OF

# DEACONS

IN RELATION TO THOSE OF THE

## Pastor and Ruling Elders

DEFINED AND DISTINGUISHED

By REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

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# THIS DISCOURSE

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO

JOHN S. BIRD, JAMES S. CHAMBERS, JOHN ANDERSON,  
ANDREW F. BROWNING AND JOHN S. SIMONTON,

THE

FIRST DEACONS

IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

CHARLESTON, S. C.

IN CONNECTION WITH WHOSE

ORDINATION

IT WAS PREACHED AND DELIVERED.





# THE OFFICE AND FUNCTIONS OF DEACONS

## IN RELATION TO THOSE OF THE PASTOR AND RULING ELDERS.

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On the question of the Divine institution, authority and perpetuity of the office of Deacon, there is no difference of opinion among Christian Churches of every age and denomination. So far as there is any faith in an organized visible Church, and in Divinely appointed officers in that Church, there is but one sentiment among Oriental, Papal and Protestant Churches, on these points. The office of Deacon, in some form, has been maintained, as of Divine authority, in every Christian Church, from the beginning of the Christian era until the present time. This uniformity of opinion and practice arises from the clear and explicit manner in which the Scriptures speak concerning Deacons. The original appointment of Deacons is given at length in the 6th chapter of the book of Acts. In the enumeration of the officers of the Church, by the Apostle Paul, in Romans, ch. 12, he mentions this office where he says, (v. 7,) as it is in the original, "let those who hold the office of Deacon (*διακονιαν*) give themselves to the Deaconship, or to the duties of the Deaconship." In his first epistle to the Corinthians also, (ch. 12: 28,) the Apostle says: "God hath set some in the Church;" and, in enumerating the officers thus set in the Church by God, he mentions "helpers"—by which, as has been generally understood, he means Deacons. The epistle to the Philippian Church—and through it, be it remembered, to all Christian Churches, is addressed to "the Bishops," or Ministers, "and Deacons;" thus teaching that every Church must have these officers.\* The Apostle Peter also is believed to refer to them, (1 Pet. 4: 11,) in the words, "if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." And still further; in the directions given to all Churches, to the end of time, in the epistle to Timothy, the qualifications of Ministers, or Bishops, and of Deacons, are given at length. 1 Tim. 3: 1-15. In this epistle we learn also that female, as well as male Deacons, were appointed under Divine authority, whose character and qualifications, and, therefore, their perpetuity, are clearly laid down. And we agree most cordially with those Churches of the Reformation, and with many of the most learned Di-

\*Some also suppose, as the original word would admit, that Epaphras and Tychicus were Deacons. See Col. 4: 12, and Col. 1: 7, and 4: 7; and Dr. Winter's Sermon on the Office of Deacon. Lond. 1822. p. 4, 5.

vines,† in believing that the Church at large loses very much, in not appointing suitable females to attend, under official sanction and authority, to all those various interests of female members of the Church, which they, and they alone, can properly superintend and promote. And we cannot but express the hope, therefore, that our Churches in this country, will see the advantage of following the example of the Reformed Churches in France and elsewhere, who are now availing themselves of the services of females, in the accomplishment of many labours of love which are now neglected or very partially performed.‡ Of how much service would many of our devoted female disciples be, were they consecrated by an open and formal request of the Church, to the furtherance of "every good word and work," which might be found compatible with their sex and their opportunity.

While, however, as has been stated, no difference has ever arisen as to the *Divine origin and perpetuity* of the office of Deacons, there have been, and there now exist, differences as it regards the functions or duties of Deacons. In the Romish, Oriental, Prelatical, and some other Churches, Deacons are considered a lower class of their various ministerial orders. But for this theory there is manifestly and avowedly no warrant whatever in the Scriptures. This, indeed, is admitted, and can be proved, by the primitive Fathers, by the leading authorities in the Romish Church, and by the most able and capable writers of the Episcopal Church, as, for instance, Lightfoot, Riddle, Bishop Croft, Hadrian, Sarava, Archbishop Wake, Archbishop Whateley, Dr. Hinds of Oxford, Mr. Palmer, Archbishop Potter, and Mr. Bingham.§

There is, however, an opposite extreme of opinion and practice on this subject, by which this office is merged into that of the Ruling Elder, so as to admit of only one class of officers besides the Minister. This is now the case in Congregational Churches in which these officers are called Deacons,\*\* and in

†See the authorities from Scripture, the Fathers, and the Reformers, given at length in Voetius Polit. Eccl., tom. 3: § 508, &c. See also the North British Review for Nov., 1847, p. 160, and the whole article.

‡See an article containing an account of all the existing institutions of Deaconesses in France, Germany, and England, and of a projected one in this country, in the Edinburgh Review for April, 1848.

§See these quoted in the work, by Dr. Smyth, on Presbytery and not Prelacy, the Scriptural and Primitive Polity of the Churches. B. 1. ch. 12.

\*\*This will be evident from the following quotations from a recent paper on the subject of Deacons adopted by the Manchester and Salford Deacon's Association, in England, and published in the London Christian Witness for July, 1848, p. 231:

"It is presumed that the Deacons of our Churches do, in the main, perform these or corresponding duties, and many others supplementary to them, which differing circumstances render necessary, and some of which, in the lapse of time, have become established usages; such as those connected with—

1. The general interests of the Churches to which they respectively be-

many Presbyterian Churches where they are called Ruling Elders. This practice, however, as it is in open contrariety to Scripture, so is it also an innovation upon the long continued and established order of both these Churches. The Waldenses, Wickliffe, Tyndal, the Lutheran Church, the Genevan Church, the Swiss Churches, the French Protestant Church, the Belgic and Dutch Churches, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Ireland, and England at every period, the Puritans and Nonconformists, the Independent or Congregational Churches in England and in this country, until within a comparatively recent date—all these concurred in recognizing the distinction between the office of Deacon and the office of Ruling Elder; in laying down both offices in their form of government, as of Divine institution, and in employing both in the actual management of their Churches.††

Why then, it may be asked, have these officers been to so great an extent merged into one to the confusion of their respective functions, and to the great neglect of many duties designed to be accomplished by both. This confusion I attribute mainly to the want of a definite and clear discrimination between the sphere of duty and the ecclesiastical relations of these two classes of officers. And it is to their ambiguity and indefiniteness of opinion the practical difficulties experienced by many Churches, who are now re-establishing the office of Deacon, are to be traced.

Let us then endeavor to define the relative position of Deacons in relation to the Pastor, Minister, or Bishop, and to the Ruling Elders.

THE PASTOR OR MINISTER,\* has, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed "Bishop." As he

long, their places of worship, and the times and arrangements of Divine service.

2. The right management of all the religious and benevolent institutions connected with the several Churches, for which the Deacons are chiefly responsible.

3. The examination and encouragement of young converts previous to admission.

4. The distribution of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper.

5. The visitation of backsliders with a view to their restoration.

6. The keeping and rendering an account, when necessary, of the money committed to their charge. To which may be added, as the duties of Deacons—

7. To note the attendance of the members at public and social worship, and at the table of the Lord.

8. To visit at regular intervals the seatholders in their places of worship at their own dwellings, for religious purposes; with some others which might be mentioned."

There is here an evident amalgamation of the duties of the Eldership and Deaconship in one.

††See quoted in Lorimer on the Office of Deacons, ch. iv. and ch. v. Edinb., 1842.

\*See Smyth's Ecclesiastical Catechism.



feeds them with spiritual food, he is called "Pastor." As he serves Christ in his Church, he is styled "Minister." As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed "Presbyter or Elder." As he is the messenger of God, he is denominated "the Angel of the Church." As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, through Christ, he is named "Ambassador." And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed "Steward of the mysteries of God."

It is made the duty of the Pastor, according to the Scriptures, to preach the Gospel, and to explain and enforce the Scriptures; to conduct the different parts of public worship; to dispense the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; to administer Church discipline; to oversee the religious state of persons and families; and thus to rule in the Church according to the laws of Christ.

The essential character of the Pastor, is, therefore, that of public authoritative teaching, together with the general superintendence and watch of all the interests of the Church, and hence it is obvious that, in order to be qualified to discharge these various and constant duties, he must be wholly and permanently devoted to the studies and to the practice of his profession. And it is equally plain, that in the manner of his introduction, and his responsibilities while in the office of the Ministry, he *ought* to be, as he is, subject to a body not directly and immediately under the control of the people, since otherwise the whole truth, and order, and interests represented by him, would be subjected to mere popular opinion. As a Minister, he stands *primarily* related to the Church at large and to the Presbytery of which he is a member. A man, therefore, may be a Minister and yet not a Pastor, and can become the Pastor of a particular Church and discharge acceptably his duties to that Church, only by the free and prevailing goodwill, affection, and respect of the great body of the members of that Church.

Were there, however, only Ministers in the Church, or were only Ministers allowed to sit, deliberate, and vote in all the conventions, conferences, councils, associations, or, as we call them, judicatories of the Church, then that Church in its government, would be a hierarchy, and would be *essentially*, whatever it might be *practically*, a ministerial or spiritual despotism.† Christ, however, has constituted His Church as Com-

† "It is," says Chevalier Bunsen, "on this union of the laity the popular strength of the Church rests. If the Church of the Pays De Vaud had been a Church organized as a whole, and not as a mere Clergy-Church, and governed by a general mixed Synod instead of the classes of the

monwealth or Republic, in which "all are brethren," and over which none are to have irresponsible dominion. Power, therefore, is given by Christ to His people, in accordance with the constitution, charter, and rules prescribed in His word, to govern His Church, appoint its officers, direct its order, enforce its discipline, and secure its efficiency. The essential feature of a republic is representation—that is, in a republic as distinguished from a monarchy, power is exercised by the people. But in distinction from a pure democracy the people exercise this power, not directly and in mass, but through their chosen representatives, to whom it is delegated in trust, and by whom it is directly and immediately enforced. In a republic, therefore, the people make use of their power directly and in person, only in their elections and at no other time.

Now, as it regards the whole doctrine, order, government and discipline of the Church, which is a spiritual republic, these representatives of the members of the Church, who are chosen by them, and who are empowered to represent them, are RULING ELDERS. These "representatives of the people," so named in our standards, are called *Elders*, not on account of their age, since Ministers are also called Elders, who ought certainly in every point of view to be of an age more mature and established than Ruling Elders, and yet are ordained at a very early age. The name Elder is, in both cases, one of dignity and not of age; and these officers are called RULING ELDERS, because they are appointed to assist the Bishop, who is the Teaching Elder, in the government of the Church, from which therefore they are distinguished by being called *Ruling Elders*. This name was derived from the order of the Jewish synagogue, in which, besides a Bishop, who was also called Presbyter or Elder, there was a bench of Elders, who were associated with the Bishop in authority, and to whom were committed the general powers of government and discipline. The importance of this office of Ruling Elder is founded in nature, reason and necessity. The power of the Church was vested by Christ in the whole body of its members; but as these cannot all meet together to transact business, or all act as officers, there must be Ruling Elders or Delegates appointed by them for these purposes.

The general duties of Ruling Elders are these—To act with the Bishop or Pastor, as "helps and governments," in the exercise of ecclesiastical authority; to watch over the flock, assist in the admission or exclusion of members, warn and censure the unruly, visit and comfort the afflicted, instruct the young, and exhort and pray, as opportunity may be given. Ruling Elders possess authority, equally with the Bishops or Pastors,

Clergy, she would have been able to resist with a very different result the brutal force of godless radicalism."

as rulers, though not as teachers: for as the Bishop is ordained not only to rule, but also to teach, Elders are equally bound, with the other members of the Church, to obey him in the Lord, and to receive his instructions, so far as they are agreeable to the word of God. The qualifications for the office of Ruling Elder are sincere piety, sound principles, prudence, zeal, and unblemished reputation. Ruling Elders therefore represent the people in all the general interests of the Church; and as they are many in every single congregation, while the Pastor is but one and acts only as Chairman or President, it is evident that every Presbyterian congregation is, to the greatest possible extent and in the strictest possible manner, a republic, analogous to our civil municipal constitutions; and as the number of Ruling Elders *must* always equal and *may* almost always outnumber that of Ministers in every other judicatory of the Church, as they *necessariy* do in the Church Session, and as in all these judicatories they sit on a perfect equality with the ministers, the whole government of the Presbyterian Church is manifestly and entirely republican.‡

DEACONS stand related to the Pastor and Ruling Elders, as the magistrates or other local civil officers of the city do to the Mayor and Council. The Pastor and Elders constitute the Church Council, are made responsible for the general government and direction of its spiritual concerns, and represent therefore these interests as well as those of the Church at large, in all its various judicatories. Deacons, on the other hand, are local officers, charged with local interests, and called upon to discharge local duties. Their field is bounded by a particular Church, and by particular interests in that Church. They are *ecclesiastical* officers, in distinction from such as are merely appointed by the congregation\* for purposes limited to the legal, fiscal, or territorial arrangements of the Church. Deacons are of *divine* institution, under divine sanction and blessing, and are intended to promote directly the welfare of the body of Christ. In these respects they resemble the Elders, and are, therefore, nominated, chosen and ordained like them. But, in distinction from the Elders, Deacons are *executive* and not legislative officers, designed for practical efficiency and not

‡“We may notice here,” says the N. British Review, “by the way, the somewhat cavalier manner in which Bunsen,” in his *Church of the Future*, there reviewed, “occasionally treats systems with whose practical working he is evidently but little acquainted. Thus, throughout, he speaks of Presbyterianism as a government of self-election in the hands of a self-renewing corporation, without once noticing the leading feature of that polity as it exists, not fettered as perhaps it is in Switzerland, but free and unembarrassed, as in America and elsewhere.—we mean the principle which secures a thorough popular representation in the ruling body, as well as a large measure of liberty in each particular congregation, through the power of choice vested in the body of the Christian people.”

\*On the different modes of electing Deacons, see Voetius, tom iii. p. 507.



for deliberative counsel. They carry out and accomplish what is thus determined by the session. To the session belongs whatever pertains to the ministry of the word, and to the doctrine, order, discipline and government of the Church; and under their direction, superintendence and controul, Deacons coöperate in the promotion of "every good word and work." To the Deacons pertains the actual management and practical discharge of every duty not included under the head of doctrine, order, or discipline, which the prosperity of the Church and of every member of the Church demands, and which are not provided for by some other arrangement of the Church. As, however, no buildings were possessed by Christians in Apostolic times, it is not *necessary* to suppose that the erection, the repairs, the chartering, the holding and the directing of these and other Church property, should be given exclusively to the Deacons, as most assuredly they cannot, in consistency with their functions, be given to Ruling Elders or to the session as such; and since Deacons can only act under the direction and in coöperation with the Elders, it would seem that every Church is left to manage the business of erecting, repairing, paying for and holding in legal trusteeship, the property of the Church, by officers of its own independent appointment. In this way, the possibility of an ecclesiastical hierarchy and of a close spiritual corporation is prevented, while the opportunity of awakening deep personal interest in the affairs of the Church is more widely extended.†

†The vital principle of Presbyterian Church government is the subordination of every court of the church to one above it, up to the Supreme Court or General Assembly, so that there is and can be no irresponsible authority. As, therefore, the Session is the only authorized court in a *particular* church, for government, Deacons must be in subordination to and under the controul and direction of the Session, just as the Session is to the Presbytery, and so on. No important business ought to be undertaken by the Deacons without the concurrence of the Session, with whom they ought to consult, and to whom, at a regular quarterly or special meeting, they ought to submit their records, their Treasurer's account, and their plans or suggestions. In this way their proceedings are brought under review and come up before the higher courts, to whom the Deacons can refer any doubtful case, by the usual modes of *reference, appeal, or complaint*.

By not keeping this principle in view, as appears from the following extract from *The Banner of Canada*, the Free Church of Scotland have already encountered much practical difficulty:

"He then alluded to the extraordinary demands of Deacon's Courts," that is, a court independent of the Session, and also of any temporal officers, such as Trustees or Committees appointed by the congregation, "*which was an excrescence on the constitution of the church, never heard of, till after the disruption*, and which was continually, through misunderstanding as to what was its province, involving them in discussion."—*Proceedings of Free Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, from the Scottish Guardian, 19th Oct.*

"The words within inverted commas, fell from a member of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, and the speaker was no other than the Rev. Andrew King. Less than three years appear to have made a great change on the views of our reverend friend, on that subject. The Deacon's Court is



On the other hand, since the whole theory of the Church, as understood by Presbyterians, supposes that no body or association of ecclesiastical or spiritual officers can exist within it, independent of the review and controul of the several judicatories of the Church, it is evident that as the sessional records and proceedings are all submitted to the review and controul of the Presbytery, and those of the Presbytery to the Synod, and those of the Synod to the General Assembly, so ought the Records and the whole business of the Deacons to come under the review and controul of the session; and so ought the direction of the property of the Church, when placed in other hands than those of the Deacons, to be so ordered as not in any way to interfere with *that controul* given to the Church of all such buildings and property, for the sole and exclusive use of a Presbyterian Church, when its standards were adopted as its form of government. In the organization of the Church, and in the ordination of its Pastor, such a consecration of the buildings and property, for such purposes, is formally made to the Presbytery, as the proper representative of the Church, and therefore to the session also, who are the proper representatives of the Presbytery; and while, therefore, the management of these buildings and property may, as we have said, be properly and wisely entrusted to Trustees or to the pew-holders generally, their use and controul—for the *spiritual purposes of the Church*—cannot with any possible consistency be in any degree alienated from the direction and controul of the only divinely instituted judicatories of the Church.

But to return. To the Deacons belong all the duties coming under the general term “serving tables”—“daily ministration”—“The Apostle’s fellowship,” that is, systematic contributions for charitable and religious purposes (*κοινωνία*)\*—ministering and “helping”—in short all duties relating to the temporal, rather than to the spiritual concerns of the Church. The old distinction, current from the time of the Reformation, refers the term “tables” to three separate departments—THE

declared to be an excrescence on the constitution of the church, unknown till after the disruption: the very thing we told Mr. King when he was here, and published in the *Banner*, and which he was so grievously offended at that he sent a bull from Montreal, as he was about to embark, abusing us for our presumption. It might have been scarcely worth while to notice this subject, and, as far as Mr. King is concerned, we would not have done so, if we had not regarded the Deacon’s Court as a dangerous invasion on the rights of the Presbyterian people in every church really desirous to be “free.” It is because, under the shelter of that court, the whole temporalities of the church are thrown into the spiritual courts, which conveys a Popish and Prelatical and Methodistical power to these courts, which will injure their spirituality and may ultimately bring ruin on the church.”

\*See this subject discussed, in an Essay on “Collections for Charitable and Religious purposes, a means of grace and a part of the divinely instituted worship of God,” by Dr. Smyth, of Charleston.

## TABLE OF THE LORD, THE TABLE OF THE PASTOR, AND THE TABLE OF THE POOR.

The word *table* is very commonly used to signify that for which a table is employed, and to include therefore the whole mode of living, or whatever kind of business is transacted upon a table. To serve a table, therefore, often, in classic writers, has reference to a money table, and signifies to take care of money affairs, and to have charge of making collections and distributing alms;† and hence, according to the general concurrence of all the reformed Churches, it is a part of the Deacon's office to take charge of THE LORD'S TABLE. This implies that they are to take care that suitable preparation should be made for the celebration of the holy ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as often as the Church, through its Session, appoints the administration of these ordinances.‡ To "the Lord's table" belongs also whatever is necessary to the proper celebration of divine worship, and of all the services for the social and public duties of religion. These constitute the spiritual provisions of Christ's house, provided for and offered to His guests through the instrumentality of His appointed servants. Whatever, therefore, respects the place in which these services are held, all matters of arrangement and decorum connected with them, and the appropriation of seats to those who unite in them, devolves properly on the Deacons. To them also are properly committed the care of the sacred vessels of the Lord's house, the baptismal and communion apparatus,—the supply of the bread, the wine, the water, and the napkin,—the arrangements for their use, and whatever personal attention is required in order to secure the proper and timely introduction of the parties to whom these ordinances are to be administered.

To "THE TABLE OF THE LORD" belongs also the accommodation of those who might be induced, or have a present wish, to attend upon the services of the sanctuary.

Strangers often feel embarrassed in finding their way into a Church, and are very much influenced in their choice of a Church by the kind manner in which they are introduced, and in which they are assisted in accommodating themselves with a seat suitable and agreeable to them.

The Lord has also made special provision in His Church for "the poor," to whom, in a most emphatic manner, "the Gospel is to be preached." And while it is *necessary*, in order to meet the expenses of the Church, to have a system of pews-rents, yet FULL AND AMPLE provision should be made for the

†See abundant proof in Robinson's Greek Lexicon of the N. T., improved by Negris & Duncan, under the word *τραπέζα*.

‡See 1 Cor. 10: 16, 21.

accommodation of those who, from a variety of causes, may be unable to meet the expense of a rented pew. To this matter the attention of Deacons should be particularly directed. Some persons again are anxious to pay what they can afford to the support of the Church, but are not able to pay the full amount of the ordinary pew rent. Now such parties ought to be in every possible way encouraged, and it would be a most grateful service for the Deacons to make an arrangement with other individuals, so as, *among them*, to assume the rent of a whole pew, and thus at once to please and accommodate all concerned. Sometimes again, persons in moderate circumstances have such a difficulty in hearing as makes it necessary that they should sit as near the pulpit as possible, and are, nevertheless, unable to pay the rent assessed upon a pew in that position. Here then is another case, in which the Church, through her Deacons, should manifest "the tenderness of Christ," in adapting the arrangements of his "TABLE" to the circumstances of His people—"the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak," and "every man pleasing his neighbor to his edification" and comfort.

And where persons are *really* unable, while in spirit willing, to contribute to the expenditures of the Church, in this case Deacons and others should manifest the greatest solicitude to make them feel at home in the Church, to provide for them suitable and convenient seats, and thus to prove that in Christ's Church there is equal regard for the poor and the humble as for the rich and elevated, and that as "Christ is the head" of all, so are all "members one of another."

To the Deacons belong also, it has been said, THE TABLE OF THE PASTOR, Bishop, or Minister. It is the law of Christ's kingdom, that "he who is taught in the Word should communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things," "the Lord having ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." As Ministers give to their work their whole time, energy and devotion—as that work requires for its accomplishment books and other apparatus to an indefinite extent, and as it occasions an outlay of actual expenditure in a variety of ways—it is at once evident that this law of ministerial support is reasonable, necessary, and designed to secure in the most effectual manner invaluable benefits to the parties concerned. These benefits are found not merely in the equivalent which is enjoyed in pastoral oversight and instruction, but also in the working of that universal law by which we value and give attention to any object in proportion as we make efforts and sacrifices to secure it.

It is, therefore, undoubtedly for the interest of members of the Church, as it is their imperative duty, to "communicate to

Him that teacheth in all good things." And it is a very important part of the Deacon's office, where the duty is not otherwise efficiently provided for, to facilitate, systematize, and certainly secure, a full provision for "the table of the Minister." It is in the power of prudent, active and liberal-minded officers, whether Deacons or otherwise, to render the performance of this duty a cheerful and affectionate tribute of respect and esteem on the part of the people, and an encouragement to confidence, perseverance and fidelity on the part of the Pastor. In Churches wholly unendowed, as ours generally are, the dependence of Ministers upon the exertions and considerate sympathy of such officers, is necessarily great, and by well-timed applications, and a wise and impartial division of labor, such officers may place their Minister in a state of respectable freedom from worldly embarrassment; supply him with all needful apparatus, so that out of a full and well-garnished storehouse he may "bring forth things new and old," "a portion always in season" for the edification and comfort of his people; and, at the same time, put it in his power to shew forth his hospitality. And, as there is a deep-seated law of our nature, which awakens lively and peculiar emotions of grateful regard, when benefits are conferred, which are purely voluntary, and not included in any stipulated agreement, the way is further open for greatly enlarging the kindly sympathies of Pastor and people, by such acts of unsolicited and unlooked-for liberality.

But the Deacons are appointed to take charge, also, of THE TABLE OF THE POOR. "The poor shall never die out of the land"—"Ye have the poor," says Christ, "always with you, but me ye have not always." "Whatsoever, therefore, ye do for them, ye do it unto me." Such is the purpose and providence of God, and such the tenor of that rule of judgment by which our future award and proportion of happiness shall be determined. The poor to whom the benevolent efforts of the Church are to be directed, are, *primarily*, the members of particular Churches; the aged, infirm, diseased, and in any way impoverished, members of "the household of faith," for whom, if the Church does not provide with liberality, "she has denied the faith," and is worse than those societies which, without exercising *as such* any faith in the Church, or in Christ, its institutor, shew forth their charity in providing, more or less plentifully, for all who have claims upon their bounty. But the Church at Jerusalem never thought of limiting their bounty to *resident members* of their Church, but embraced all of every country and language who came within the reach of their charitable efforts; and nothing is more evident in the Apostolic narrative than the "readiness" with which the Apostolic Churches were willing, "to the full extent of their power"—



aye, and "beyond their power," to aid the necessities of Christian brethren and sisters elsewhere, as well as within their own sphere.

The poor, therefore, to whom the Deacons are to "give heed," are Christ's poor—*primarily*, those of their own immediate Church, and, *secondarily*, all other "poor saints," wherever they are found, and so far as there is ability and opportunity "to communicate with them in their necessities."

But it is not for these poor Christians merely, that Christ claims attention and regard. The poor generally, whether believers or not, are the objects of Christ's special compassion. Among these He chose to become incarnate, for "He had not where to lay his head." From these He chose His disciples; to these He manifested most of His mighty works, and for them He performed most of His miraculous cures. To every one of them, in the person of the wounded traveller, He points us as a neighbor to whose wants we are bound to attend, and in the good Samaritan, in contrast with the Priests and Levites, Christ depicts the character and conduct of His *true* and approved disciples. Christians are, in an eminent sense, the guardians of the poor, and whatever will promote their comfort and well-being, ought to be devised, advocated, and supported by them. Every Church, therefore, is, and ought to be, an association for the temporal, the moral, and the spiritual improvement of the poor. This should be one leading and prominent object, for which there should be united, systematic, and vigorous effort.

For this purpose are Deacons instituted by Christ, and clothed with authority, and invoked by a solemn sense of duty, to "devise liberally" and wisely for "this heritage of the Lord." The office of Deacon is undervalued by many, only because this great function of the Church is little known and little felt. The Church is suffering greatly because she has so long, and to so great an extent, "passed by on the other side," and left the poor to perish in neglect, or to be taken up by other associations formed "to supply her lack of service." The injury done to the cause of Christ, by this neglect, is, beyond calculation, great.

There ought to be in every Church, therefore, a large bench of Deacons, including men of prudence, piety, wisdom, and great liberality—say, eighteen or twenty. Among these, "the region round about" the Church should be divided into small sections, so that "two by two" they might visit and become personally acquainted with all the poor in their respective districts. By visiting these poor families, their character, condition and wants would be known, and by availing themselves of the resources within reach, their immediate wants could be relieved, the education of their children provided for, habits of

industry and economy promoted, by introducing them to the Savings Bank, and encouraging them to live within their means, and a spirit of love, reverence, and attachment, be cherished among the poor, towards their wealthier neighbours.

Depend upon it, the severance of the poor from the bounty and oversight of the Church, is a fatal policy, both for the Church and the community. This policy is fatal to *the Church*, because the poor have been the friends and supporters of the Church, when higher parties have been hostile; because "to the poor the Gospel is preached;" because "the poor God has chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the promises;" because, therefore, the blessing of God is made to depend upon the attention of the Church to the poor; and because, if the poor are alienated from the Church, they will be found—as in England, in Ireland, in France, and wherever they are supported by poor laws, or not provided for at all—the greatest enemies of truth and righteousness, and the greatest hindrances to all moral and social improvement. Let the poor, however,—as to some extent is the case in many parts of Scotland—be provided for by the church, and they will be found the greatest friends, supporters, and patrons of the church—be elevated and ennobled in their own character, and become industrious, moral, and peaceable in their whole deportment.

The policy, therefore, of leaving the poor to legal assistance, will be found equally fatal to the *community at large*. It introduces the poor-law system with all its gigantic evils. It severs the provisions for the poor from all moral and religious influences. It destroys self-respect, degrades moral character, multiplies a thousand-fold the evil it attempts to meet, fosters pride and dissatisfaction, and by sanctioning the idea of a *legal right* to such provision, paves the way for the spirit of agrarianism, and of hatred and dislike to all the distinctions of society. §

§On this subject see a very able work, Bosanquet on the Poor. Mr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, in his work on Deacons, has the following remarks, which are of great weight: "The world holds that it deals in substantial kindness, while the Christian contents himself with faith, as distinguished from morality. To meet this common charge, it is most desirable, for the honour of Christianity and the Christian Church, that they be seen in their true character as the patrons of the poor, especially the pious poor: and how can this be better done than when it appears that a court of officers, to watch over the interests of the poor, in the spirit of Christianity, is an essential part of the constitution of the Christian Church? So long as the Church cannot point to these officers in living operation under her authority, she wants the full answer which she may and ought to have it in her power to return to the charges and insinuations, whether of worldliness, or superstition, or infidelity. It is not enough to say that Christians are charitable—far more charitable than others—unless it can be shown that the poor are so important in their eyes, and dear to their hearts, that they have a regular official provision in the very structure of the Christian Church for attending to their wants, and that men are failing in Christian duty where this, in one form or another, is wanting. Let, however, the Chris-

From what has been said, and from the other passages of Scripture in which the office of Deacon is described, it is evident that while this office is local, and while, for the sake of order and unity, it must be under the direction of the session and auxiliary to it, it is one in itself most important and honourable, and in its influence most beneficial to the church and to the community. It is equally evident that the field of duty opened to the Christian efforts of Deacons is of incalculable value. Indeed, there is no other limit to it than the benevolent desires and active zeal of those who fill the office. In many ways, not now pointed out, Deacons might, in a silent and indirect manner, contribute to the personal, social and business prosperity of those who are connected with the church; recommend them to those who might need their services or their goods; put those who wish employment in the way of finding it; introduce those who are strangers, to the acquaintance of each other; procure subscribers for those periodicals of our church, whose circulation is deemed advisable; promote the establishment of parochial schools, under the watch and care of the church: and in numerous ways, incapable of distinct mention, build up, strengthen and beautify Zion.\*

tian Church be fully equipped with a large staff of laborious tender-hearted Deacons, watching over the poor from week to week and year to year, ministering to their wants out of the donations of the Church, and treating them with the kindness of brethren and sisters; and what is there in any occasional charitable bequest, any regular and extraordinary deed of benevolence, on the part of the men of the world, which could bear any comparison with such friendship? Tried by this test, Christianity would not only be acquitted of indifference—its genuine liberality would be established and rendered conspicuous. We can conceive few things more dishonorable to Protestant Christianity, or more fitted to impair its progress, than to be able to say, with apparent truth, that it is careless of the interests of the poor—more careless than the men who make less pretension. And, on the other hand, we can conceive few things more fitted to propitiate the good will of the world, which, at all events, admires benevolence, than to be able, in a way which does not admit of cavil, to show that the same religious system which alone can provide for the welfare of eternity, is the most active and unwearied guardian of the poor man's interest in time. This is an argument which must always be powerful, but particularly in such a day as the present, when it is to be feared irreligion and infidelity prevail to a considerable extent among the humbler classes of society—classes which were once happily strangers to the poison, and which are naturally led, from their very circumstances, to make comparison of men and systems in connection with their care for the poor, and to consider this as almost the exclusive standard of character."

\*In depicting his Church of the Future, Chevalier Bunsen says—"We found the most startling and important signs of this in the help afforded to the church in her care of the poor, the sick and the prisoners. We were here met by a zealous company of men and women, who had founded institutions of helpful love, for the reformation of those who have gone astray, for the maintenance of homeless and orphan children, for the comfort of the sick and the prisoner; we were met by operatives full of faith, and by a holy band of deaconesses, performing the works of the merciful sisters of the clergy-church, without vows, in the full freedom of the gospel, and in the might of free, because thankful, love. Now every one who considers the way in which the diaconate first decayed and died, and how it is especially wanting in the clergy-church, because it requires for its free development the full communion of the laity, and the full acknowledgment



But in no other way can Deacons do more service than by carrying out a plan of systematic contribution, by which every member of the church and congregation shall have the opportunity of giving what they *should* give to the several objects of Christian benevolence, to which the attention of the church is directed. In this way, every one may know, with certainty, when and how they shall be called upon—may be enabled to “set apart” their “gifts” and have them ready—may become habituated to give, from principle and “from a willing mind,” and therefore prayerfully and cheerfully.

Such is, undoubtedly, the divinely appointed order for raising charitable and religious contributions, and one special and primary object for which the church is instituted, and for which every Christian is “called and chosen of God.” Such contribution is a part of Christian discipleship, a test and evidence of our sincere love and devotion to the Saviour. It is a prominent part of Apostolic institution, precept and practice. It is an integral part of the worship we may acceptably render to God, and to withhold which is to “rob” and dishonor “God” and to put Him to an open shame before the world. A systematic plan by which all the members of the church may be reached, and by which such collections might be made to contribute to the spiritual benefit of all concerned, was framed by the Apostles, and is given for our instruction and example; and as, therefore, the church is returning to the scriptural order of Deacons, let the Deacons direct their special attention

of the universal priesthood, will readily comprehend the historical significance of the fact, that amongst the vigorous offshoots of the church-life of the present day, the diaconate is the most distinctly and gloriously prominent. *This is the ministry of love, and in an especial manner the ministry of the Church of the Future.* We may here behold coming to the birth the new elements of that Church of the Future, whose birth-throes we all feel, of that free congregation of faithful men, to which the groaning of the creature, and the ever more fearful revelations of the misery of mankind are pointing. Here is that ministry which is open to all; here is that approval of our faith to which every one is called; here is that exercise of the priesthood for which every constitution of the church gives liberty. Here is that centre from which the constitution of this Church of the Future must proceed, if it is to be partaker of an inward and spiritual life.”—*Bunsen*, pp. 202-205.

“All hail,” says the N. British Reviewer, “to such a Church of the Future! The world yearns for it; creation groans for it. Society is sick at heart; sick of sore maladies which politics can scarcely cure; sick of many empirics and few physicians. And Christ’s church alone has the *panacea*—the universal cure. Deacons and Deaconesses, Brothers and Sisters of Charity—with Christ’s love in their hearts and no Pope’s yoke on their necks—Priests and Priestesses, self-devoted to the High Priest’s own work of going about to do good—such is the ministry, the age, and the church, and the world, all demand. Otherwise, churches are self-consuming; light and life go out in a cold vacuum. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Schoolmasters, People, eat it on themselves and on one another. Forms of polity and worship stand; rights of rule and rights of choice are balanced; but love dies; and with love all peace and joy. An earnest, outgoing ministry, in all who are the Lord’s—in Dorcas as in Paul—is the grand want of the times. What church will realize this? That is the church of the Future! Bunsen, Arnold, Vinet, Chalmers, all are one here. For, at the last, intellect, humanity, piety, are always one.”



to the restoration of the scriptural plan and methods of raising collections, for all those purposes to which the church is devoted.

From what has been said, it will be further seen that, while Deacons are only officers in a particular church, their office is essentially connected with every interest of Christ and His cause. Their qualifications, therefore, cannot be too spiritual or too high; nor should any provisions by which the purity, the efficiency, and the spirituality of the Eldership are guarded, be omitted in the case of Deacons. Our standards, therefore, make the mode of nomination, election and ordination, the same, both for Deacons and Elders; and while they allow their election to be made by the members of the church, limit their nomination to the session.

In conclusion, we would say, that the church cannot too deeply feel the obligation under which she is laid to those who undertake and endeavour faithfully to discharge the duties of these several offices, nor too "highly esteem them in love for their work's sake." And as the efficiency of a session, and of deacons when appointed, depends upon the perfect harmony and unison of views and feelings which prevail among these officers, so that they may ALL be "co-workers" and "fellow laborers," it follows, that for this reason, even if there was no other, the nomination of any additional members, to either office, is wisely given, by our standards, and the practice of our best regulated churches, to the session; and that, in their election, great regard should be paid by the members of the church to the conviction and wishes of the session, as manifested in their nominations. Could parties, uncongenial or antagonistic, be introduced into either body, the consequence would be inevitably injurious to every interest of the church, and be a certain means of preventing it from enjoying the gratuitous services of its most valuable members.‡

‡"Where the Pastor and the Deacons act independently of each other," says Dr. Winter,\* "they are generally mutual hindrances; but where they strive together, they are mutual helps."

"Christian brethren," said my friend Dr. Newman, who preached on this subject more than fifteen years ago, at the Monthly Meeting of the Baptist Ministers and Churches, in this city and its vicinity, "Christian brethren! give to the Minister I love, for a Deacon, a man in whose house he may sit down at ease, when he is weary and loaded with care; into whose bosom he may freely pour his sorrows, and by whose lips he may be soothed, when he is vexed and perplexed; by whose illuminated mind he may be guided in a difficulty, and by whose liberality and cordial co-operation he may be animated, and assisted in every generous undertaking."†

\*Mr. Jay's friend, in his Sermon on the Office of Deacons. See also an elaborate discourse on this subject, by the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of the Reformed or Secession Church in this country, not at this moment at my hand.

†See "The Work and Reward of Faithful Deacons:" a sermon, addressed to the Baptist Monthly Association, August 21, 1806. By William Newman, D. D. Second Edition, 1820.

## APPENDIX.

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The following paper was adopted by the Session of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, in view of the appointment of Deacons:

The Bible and our standards have made the office of Deacon, in distinction from that of the Pastor and the Ruling Elder, plain, obvious and imperative. And the General Assembly, together with our Presbytery, have called upon every church where the office has fallen into disuse, to have it restored. The Ministry and the Eldership have relation to the doctrine, discipline and government of the church; and the Deaconship to the general interests of the poor, to collections made for pious purposes, and, generally, to all matters relating to the interests of the church, in which the session may desire their co-operation.

It is thus manifest that the duties assigned to Deacons, need not interfere either with those of the session, on the one hand, or of such officers, on the other hand, as are appointed by the congregation, for the exclusive management of its fiscal affairs, its buildings, and its burial ground.

*Resolved*, therefore, that this session do now proceed to nominate as many Deacons as may be at present expedient, to be recommended to the church for their election.

*Resolved*, that, in doing this, the following rules be adopted, for the better understanding of the mutual duties of Deacons and Elders:

1st. The session, consisting of the Pastor and Ruling Elders, constitute the supreme and only authorized body in the church, for directing (in accordance with its spiritual rules) every thing pertaining to the spiritual order, government and discipline of the same.

2d. The Deacons, therefore, are appointed to act only in accordance with the views of the session, and within that field to which session may direct their labors; and all nominations for that office shall be made by the session.

3d. It shall be the duty of the Deacons to appoint a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and to keep minutes of all their proceedings, which shall be submitted to the session for review and approval once a quarter.

4th. Within the field assigned to them, it shall be the duty of the Deacons to devise and employ every proper means for furthering the objects entrusted to their care.

5th. Once a quarter, or oftener, if necessary, the Deacons shall meet with the session, when they shall make their report and receive directions and advice, and when appropriations to the regular beneficiaries of the church shall be made.

6th. In regard to the specific duties of the Deacons: *Resolved*, that to them be committed, under the aforesaid direction and superintendence of the session—

I. The poor, and every thing pertaining to their temporal comfort and advantage.

II. The collections for all religious purposes, to be made in the congregation as appointed by the session, and the means of rendering them more general, more equal, more liberal, and therefore more systematic.

III. The arrangements for the accommodation of strangers and others, at all the meetings of the church.

IV. It shall be the duty of the Deacons also to use every proper and practicable means for inducing strangers to attend the church,—for aiding and assisting young men and others in procuring situations or employment,—for promoting, as far as practicable, the temporal welfare, business and prospects, of members of the church; and in every other way for furthering its interests.

V. It shall be further the duty and business of the Deacons, to assist in promoting the circulation of such periodicals as, in the judgment of the session, it is desirable to circulate in the congregation.

Finally, as it regards the election and ordination of Deacons. *Resolved*, that they be conducted in the same manner as those of Ruling Elders, according to Rules 1 and 2 of this church.







THE  
HISTORY, CHARACTER  
AND  
RESULTS  
OF THE  
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES  
A DISCOURSE  
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BI-CENTENARY ANNIVERSARY OF THAT  
BODY.

By THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.,

Author of Lectures on the Prelatical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession,  
Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, Ecclesi-  
astical Republicanism, An Ecclesiastical Catechism, etc.

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THIS VOLUME,  
WHICH IS PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF MANY WHO  
HEARD IT, IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

TO

H. V. BUTLER, ESQ.,  
OF PATTERSON, N. J.,  
BY WHOSE GENEROSITY IT IS PRESENTED TO THE  
PUBLIC.





## PREFACE.

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The following discourse was prepared by the author, to be delivered to his own congregation, on the occasion of the bi-centenary celebration of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. During his visit to the North, he was requested to deliver it in the Old South Church, Boston, in the First Church in Charlestown, in Paterson, N. J., in New Brunswick, and in Philadelphia. On each of these occasions the author was requested to publish it; and when he had returned home, he received a generous request from the gentleman to whom it is dedicated, to allow it to be published at his expense. To this request he has felt it his duty to accede. Not that there is any pretension in the discourse to elegance of style, or to great originality of matter. To be faithful to history, the facts must be, of necessity, such as are already acknowledged. All that the author claims is, to have combined in the discourse a general summary of all the information we possess concerning this remarkable Assembly, in its origin, progress, and results; to have shown its relations to the great struggle for religious and civil liberty which was then going on; to have presented the grounds upon which it has laid posterity under a debt of lasting gratitude; and to have offered some vindication of the Assembly from the charge of persecution and intolerance.

All that is expected, therefore, from this publication is, that it may convey, in a small compass, the most necessary information on these points, to some who may not have leisure or opportunity to peruse more lengthened works.

Should any similarity be found in the *arrangement* of this discourse and the history of Mr. Hetherington, the author would state that, although he has now made some references to that valuable work, this was written in May, 1843, and of course months before the appearance of the work referred to.

CHARLESTON, S. C., SEPTEMBER, 1843.



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# HISTORY

## OF THE

### WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

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#### SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, WITH A REVIEW OF THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE  
CALLING OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

We are on this occasion called upon, with an innumerable multitude in every quarter of the globe, and of many different denominations, to celebrate the bicentenary anniversary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. To this body the world is indebted for those standards of faith and practice which have been substantially adopted, not only by the Presbyterian Church in all its branches, but also by the Congregational and Baptist denominations. The return of a second centennial anniversary of this Assembly, invokes the grateful remembrance of all who value these standards, and the blessings of religious and civil freedom with which they have become inseparably connected. If the clear definition and establishment of those doctrines that are of God, alike freed from Antinomian licentiousness on the one hand, and from fanatical extravagance on the other; if the preparation of standards which have served as bulwarks to the truth as it is in Jesus, when error and heresy have come in like a flood upon the church, and which are at this moment venerated, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the word of God, by growing multitudes; and if a devotion to the cause of human rights which no bribery or persecution could extinguish; if, I say, these achievements are sufficient to demand our gratitude, then are we imperatively called upon to hail with exultation this natal day of our spiritual birthright, to consider the days of old and the years of ancient times; and to bring to remembrance the Westminster Assembly.

In order, however, properly to appreciate the debt of gratitude we owe to this General Council of the Church, and to enter heartily into this commemoration, we must recall to mind the circumstances which gave origin to this assembly,\* and the nature and influence of its proceedings. It will be our object, therefore, in this discourse to present some general observations relating to the history, character, and results of this body.

\*See these minutely given in the Preface to Reid's *Lives of the Divines of the Westminster Assembly*. Paisley, 1811.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines is to be regarded both as an effect and as a cause. It was at once the result of certain previous movements, and the source of other and momentous consequences to which it gave occasion. Itself the fruit of former vegetation, it became the seed of new productions. From it, as a starting point, the Presbyterian Church commenced her glorious race, freed from the clogs and hinderances with which she had been long previously bound, and is now seen in all the strength of growing maturity, pressing on towards the mark for the prize of her high calling; while upon the foundation of its doctrinal standards millions build the fabric of their everlasting hopes.

To understand the causes which led to the convention of the Westminster Assembly, we must go back to the era of the English Reformation and trace the history and working of the Anglican hierarchy. Unlike the Continental and Scottish reforms, which were originated, and sustained, and completed by the people, the English Reformation was altogether a political movement, and an affair of state. It was forced upon an unprepared and unenlightened people, like any other matter of political legislation. Neither was it a *reformation*, but rather an *adaptation* of the existing hierarchy to the views and purposes of a covetous, worldly-minded, and ambitious monarch. While the supremacy of the pope was renounced, the king was recognized as the head of the church, and was thus implicated in that usurpation of the royal prerogative of Christ, and in those encroachments on the rights of the church, which form one of the weightiest charges against the Roman Antichrist. And while the people, in their state of ignorance, spurned from them the established religion—as far as they dared express their feelings—because it was in any way, and to any degree an alteration of the old, that same people, when fully instructed in the knowledge of the gospel, rejected to a great extent this same established religion, because it was but a modification of the corrupted papacy, and altogether unlike the primitive and apostolical church of Christ. It is beyond all controversy certain, that had the great body of the clergy and the laity, in the days of Elizabeth, possessed the liberty of carrying out their views, the Church of England would have been modelled after the same original platform of Presbyterian polity which was preserved to us in the sanctuary of truth, and universally adopted by every reformed church in Christendom.\* Coerced into obedience to the powers that ruled over them, and legislated into conformity by the all-convincing arguments of proclamations, penalties, imprisonment, torture, infamy, and

\*See the author's Work on "Presbytery, and not Prelacy, the Scriptural and Primitive Polity," for proof.

death, the people of England groaned within themselves, being burdened. Having no refuge in man, they sought relief in God, into whose ear they poured their complaints, and cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge our cause, and avenge our sufferings on them that oppress us?"

Prelacy is a plain and manifest deviation from the institutions of Christ. As such it appeared to all the reformed churches, and to a large portion of the English people. They sought, therefore, its removal by an appeal to scriptural argument and authority. But prelacy had also become identified with spiritual despotism and arbitrary proceedings. Secular power, external violence, inquisitorial authority, and political tyranny, as well as ecclesiastical jurisdiction, had long been annexed to the hierarchy, had become characteristic of its conduct, and interwoven with all its proceedings. Bishops were not only lords spiritual, but also lords temporal. Their power extended equally to the body and the soul, and to civil as well as to ecclesiastical penalties. They domineered over all the ecclesiastical rights of the people in the church, while they lent themselves as the tools of arbitrary monarchs in the state. They had, too, become possessed of extensive power, independent of the crown and parliament; a power which, being based upon a divine right and thus beyond the reach of any human control, could be questioned only by the voice of blasphemous impiety. Their history is filled with treasons, conspiracies, and oppression.\* They had ever been found opposed to the laws and liberties of the people, and to the reformation of abuses. Their high-handed proceedings in the Bishops' courts; their illegal powers as members of the High Commission;† and the exorbitant prerogative of the crown, which they abetted and sustained, prostrated all freedom, trampled upon the just rights of the citizen, and left men of every quality and degree at the mercy of a rapacious despotism.‡

\*The collected proofs of these charges, from authentic sources, may be seen given at length by that learned and persecuted man, Counsellor Prynne, in his "Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacy both to regular Monarchy and civil Unity; or an Historical Collection of the several execrable Treasons, Conspiracies, Rebellions, Seditions, State-schisms, Contumacies, Oppressions, and Anti-Monarchical Practices, of our English, Brit'sh, French, Scottish, and Irish Lordly Prelates, against our Kings, Kingdomes, Laws, Liberties; and of the several Wars, and civil Dissensions occasioned by them in. or against our Realm, in former and latter ages." London, 1641, 2 vols, 4to.

‡By this dreadful tribunal many were reduced to utter poverty by fines, many were imprisoned till they contracted fatal diseases, others were banished, and some were actually sold for slaves.

†It was actually decided by the twelve judges of the Star Chamber, "That the King, having the supreme ecclesiastical power, could, without parliament make orders and constitutions for church government; that the High Commissioner might enforce them, ex officio, without libel; and



This language may appear strong, but it is inadequate to express the true character of the Anglican hierarchy. Take, for example, the case of Leighton, father of the celebrated Archbishop. At the instigation of Laud, and upon the charge of having published a book against prelacy!—he was thrown into prison, where he lay in a filthy cell infested with vermin for fifteen weeks, so that when served with his libel his hair and skin had come off his body, and he was so reduced in strength as to be unable to appear at the bar. This, however, made no difference. Untried and unheard he was condemned to suffer the following sentence, on hearing which pronounced, Laud, we are told, “pulled off his cap and gave God thanks.” “The horrid sentence,” says the sufferer in his petition to parliament some years afterwards, “was to be inflicted with knife, sword, fire, and whip, at and upon the pillory, with ten thousand pounds fine; which some of the lords of court conceived could never be inflicted, but only that it was imposed on a dying man to terrify others. But Laud and his creatures caused the sentence to be executed with a witness; for the hangman was animated all the night before, with strong drink in the prison, and with threatening words, to do it cruelly. Your petitioner’s hands being tied to a stake, besides all other torments, he received thirty-six stripes with a treble cord, after which he stood almost two hours in the pillory in cold, frost, and snow, and then suffered the rest, as cutting off the ear, firing the face, and slitting up the nose. He was made a spectacle of misery to men and angels. And on that day seven nights, the sores upon his back, ears, nose and face, not being cured, he was again whipped at the pillory in Cheapside, and then had the remainder of the sentence executed by cutting off the other ear, slitting up the other nostril, and branding the other cheek!”

Similar punishments were inflicted on Counsellor Prynne, Dr. Bastwick, and Dr. Burton, and for the same atrocious crime of having written against the prelacy!

In short, “the Church of England continued under the Stuarts what she had become under the Tudors: a submissive slave to the higher ranks, a tyrant to the lower.”\* And the portentous re-appearance, at the present time, and in our own country as well as in England, of the fundamental principle,—the prelatial doctrine of Apostolical Succession,—from which these results followed, may well excite alarm; embodying, as it does, the very essence of despotism, civil and religious, and

that subjects might not frame petitions for relief without being guilty of an offence finable at discretion, and very near to treason and felony.” Neal, Vol. I. p. 416, 417.

\*Hoffman’s Anglo-Prussian Bishopric, p. 28.

possessing an energy that nothing human can control without a struggle, wide, wasting, and deadly, too fearful even to be imagined.†

Nor was this all. While prelacy had become identified, as was believed, with despotic cruelty and injustice, an event occurred which awakened the whole people of Britain to a full perception of their awful condition, and still more fearful prospects,—I allude to the horrible massacre of the Irish Protestants, by the Roman Catholics. Taught to believe that by putting heretics to death they would merit favor at the hands of God, these deluded men received the sacrament before commencing the work of carnage, and swore before high heaven that they would not leave a Protestant alive in the whole kingdom. For many months, nay, with some little intermission, for two years, the country was a scene of the most unparalleled atrocities. No mercy was shown to age, or rank, or sex. Men, women, and even children, became the executioners of helpless victims, and everywhere perpetrated the most execrable atrocities. Suffice it to say, that according to some writers not less than 300,000 Protestants were sacrificed to glut the ferocious appetite of Popery.‡ Neither can King Charles be altogether freed from the charge of having connived at, if he did not promote, this infamous treachery. Certain it is, that the object avowed by the Papists was the subjugation of the English parliament and the Scottish army; the support of the king in his struggle for arbitrary power, and the more complete enslavement of the British nation.§

By these, and other similar causes, which time will not permit us to detail, the public mind was led to regard prelacy as equally dangerous to the religion, liberties, and peace of the three kingdoms, and thus to desire the complete extirpation of the hierarchy. The controversy respecting high-churchism,

†Hatherington, Hist. of Westm. Ass., p. 50. See abundant proofs of the intolerant tendencies and results of this doctrine both in England and America, in the Author's Lectures on the Prelatical Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession, Lecture XIII.

‡See on this subject the various calculations as given in Dr. Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Vol. I. p. 336. 337.

§The Royal Commission from Charles I. for the movements of 1641, has been strenuously denied. The evidence of its reality seems, however, beyond controversy. The evidence may be summed up as follows:—(1.) The Royal Commission was published by Sir Phelim O'Neil himself, in his proclamation from Newry, 1641. (2.) It was reprinted in the "*Mysteries of Iniquity*," 1643. (3.) In "*Vicar's Parliamentary Chronicle*," 1646. (4.) In Milton's Works, 1698. And those who desire to see the genuineness of the Commission fully canvassed, may consult Brodie, Vol. III. p. 190-9; and Godwin, Vol. I. p. 225-30. (5.) Even Reilly, a stanch Romanist, admits that Lords Auburn and Osmond were instructed by Charles to seize the castle of Dublin, the lords justices, &c., and that Sir Phelim merely endeavoured to have the first hand in the work. (6.) The declaration of the commons, July 25, 1642, is sufficient to prove that there was a plot between the queen and the Irish Papists, and that the king knew of it.

which had hitherto been carried on by the Puritans on religious grounds, was now, by the conduct of the prelates, forced to assume the character of a defence of civil liberty. The floodgates of the popular mind were opened. The subject of church government became the all-engrossing topic of the day, and, from its close connection with public affairs, a national question. Within a period of twenty years no fewer than 30,000 pamphlets were issued on this subject. Feeling ran deeper every day against the prelates, until, by the disclosures brought out upon the trial of Archbishop Laud, it burst forth in ungovernable fury, and demanded their removal from office.

The commons, therefore, having been petitioned to that effect by the London ministers, in their grand remonstrance, presented in 1641, urged the necessity of a free synod, to take into consideration, and remove the grievances of the church. In the treaty of Oxford a bill was offered to the same purpose and rejected. Some time after, Dr. Burgess, at the head of the Puritan clergy, again applied to parliament for the same purpose. At length an ordinance was passed by the parliament in June, 1643, convening an assembly by their own authority. In this ordinance they say, "Whereas, among the infinite blessings of Almighty God upon this nation, none is, or can be, more clear to us than the purity of our religion; and for that as yet many things remain in the liturgy, discipline, and government of the church, which do necessarily require a further and more perfect reformation, than as yet hath been obtained; and whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the lords and commons assembled in parliament, that the present church government, by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissars, deans, and chapters, arch-deacons, and other ecclesiastical officers, depending upon the hierarchy, is evil and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of this kingdom; therefore they are resolved, that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the church as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other reformed churches abroad; and for the better effecting hereof, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an assembly of learned, godly, and judicious divines, who, together with some members of both houses of parliament, are to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, as shall be proposed unto them, by both or either houses of parliament, and to give their council and

advice therein to both or either of said houses, when, and so often, as they shall be thereunto required."

The language and spirit of this ordinance will be considered as justly marvellous, when it is recollected, that this very parliament was composed of persons who had been almost to a man Episcopalians, and attached to Episcopal government; men, too, possessed of great and plentiful fortunes; and, as Clarendon, who states these facts, allows, of great gravity and wisdom.\*

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## SECTION II.

### THE NATURE, HISTORY, AND CHARACTER OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

The Assembly was to consist of ten lords, twenty commoners, and one hundred and twenty-one ministers; in all, about one hundred and fifty-one members. In accordance with what we have stated, as it regards the ecclesiastical views of the parliament, the members chosen to constitute this Assembly were, almost all, such as had till then conformed to the Established Church of England. § From the fact that it was convened at Westminster, in the Abbey Church, it has been denominated the Westminster Assembly. And forasmuch as it was not called by ecclesiastical authority, or according to any fixed rules of ecclesiastical procedure, but by the authority of parliament, it is styled an Assembly, and not a Convocation or Synod. It was designed to be an ecclesiastical advisory council, to aid and assist the parliament in the determinations of religious questions. It was thus identified with the national legislature and became a part of that body, or rather its ecclesiastical cabinet. † All its members were chosen by the parliament, who selected two from each county, and in addition to these, some of the most learned men of the age, such as Archbishop Usher, Dr. Holdsworth, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Wincop, Bishops Westfield, and Prideaux, and many more. ‡ Parliament also drew up the

\*Clarendon, Vol. I., p. 184. M'Crie's Scottish Church Hist. p. 275. "As to religion," says Clarendon, "they were all members of the Established Church, and almost to a man for Episcopal government."

§In their answer to the reasons given by the Episcopal divines for withdrawing from the body, the assembly answer the charge that "the divines were for the most part of a puritanical stamp and enemies to the hierarchy," by saying, "the divines, except the Scots and French, were in Episcopal orders, educated in our own universities, and most of them graduates." Neal's Hist. of Puritans, Vol. III. 49. "Those who made up the Westminster Assembly, and who were the honour of the parliamentary party throughout the land, were almost all such as had till then conformed." Orme's Life of Baxter, Vol. I. p. 35.

†In the answer of the assembly to the Episcopal divines they say, "This being not designed for a legal convocation, but for a council to the parliament in the reformation of the church." Neal, III. 49.

‡A few of the royalist Episcopal divines at first met with the Assembly, but afterwards withdrew when the king had prohibited their meeting.



rules by which in all their deliberations they were to be directed and governed, and the solemn oath or protestation which was to be taken by every member of the body. The Assembly, therefore, had no independent existence or authority. Its members were sworn to "make good out of Scripture what any man undertook to prove," and "to maintain nothing in matters of doctrine, but what they thought in their conscience to be truth; or in point of discipline but what should conduce most to the glory of God, and to the good and peace of the church." They could not, however, enforce any thing by their own power, as either true or obligatory. All their productions are entitled, "The humble advice of the Assembly of Divines, by authority of parliament sitting at Westminster concerning," &c. &c. § The ecclesiastical authority *now* attached to the Westminster Assembly's standards, arises solely from their adoption by the various bodies who have received them as their own, while their intrinsic validity is based upon the word of God, on which they are exclusively founded. The Assembly was but a component part of the most celebrated of all parliaments—a wheel within a wheel—one band of actors in that glorious drama which will ever attract the admiration and excite the reverence of mankind. By obeying the summons of the parliament, the members of the Assembly, at once and forever, committed themselves to the cause of the people against their tyrannical oppressor; braved the fury of an incensed monarch, who had openly denounced their meeting as traitorous, and pledged their lives, property, and sacred honour, to the support of liberty and truth.\* The volcanic fires which had long been burning in secret had now burst forth, and filled the land with civil commotion. To these divines was given the hazardous but honourable duty to direct the whirlwind and the storm which were then raging, and if possible to suggest such measures as might reduce their conflicting elements to order and harmony. By the merits of that struggle, which was then commenced in desperate earnestness, must this Assembly be now tested. Was it a traitorous rebellion against *lawful* power and the heaven-appointed insolence of despots?—then were they accessories to the nefarious plot, and base hypocrites in the sight of heaven. But was that outburst of freedom "the commencement of all true liberty, public and personal," and the

§Of these I possess copies in the original editions. I have also ten 4to volumes of the discourses they delivered before the parliament.

\*In their answer to the Episcopal divines, who alleged that the Assembly were not authorized by the king, they replied, "that the constitution at present was dissolved; that there were two sovereign contending parties in the nation; and if the war in which the parliament was engaged was just and necessary, they might assume this branch of the prerogative, till the nation was settled, as well as any other." Neal, Vol. III. p. 49.

birth-day of a nation's rights?—then are the members of the Westminster Assembly to be held in everlasting remembrance.

The Assembly continued to act and deliberate till 1648-9, about three weeks after the king's death, having set five years, six months, and twenty-two days, during which time they had eleven hundred and sixty-three sessions. They were still employed after that time, as a committee for the examination, ordination, and induction of ministers, till March 25th, 1652, when the long parliament being turned out of the house by Oliver Cromwell, they also broke up without any formal dissolution. They thus rose and fell with the long parliament, and were buried with it in the same grave of constitutional liberty.

The Westminster Assembly was a congregation of the most wise, pious, liberal and learned spirits of the age. "The divines there congregated," says Baxter, "were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity, and being not worthy to be one myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, even in the face of malice and envy; that as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidence left us, the Christian world, since the days of the Apostles, had never a Synod of more excellent divines than this, and the Synod of Dort." "For personal integrity, ministerial diligence, and general scholarship, the Westminster Assembly," says Dr. Price, who is warmly opposed to presbyterianism, "has never been surpassed by any ecclesiastical assemblage."\* Let any one examine the list of its members, and he will find among them the most considerable lawyers and divines of a most remarkable age.

The names of Lightfoot, Gataker, Greenhill, Arrowsmith, Twisse, Reynolds (afterwards bishop), Burgess, Bolton, Burroughs, Calamy, Caryl, Godwin, Hildersham, Marshal, Scudder, Vines, Wallis, Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, Baillie, and many others, are among the most illustrious in English history, and will never be undervalued in the learned world. Selden, also, among the lay members, and Prynne, the great Presbyterian advocate in the parliament, were prodigies of learning, and their works treasures of erudition.

In fact all the members were men of distinction, and while Cajetan, who was reputed to be the most learned man in the Council of Trent, knew not a word of Hebrew,‡ many of these

\*Dr. Price's Hist. of Non. Conf. Vol. II. p. 248.

‡"Neither was there amongst these prelates any one remarkable for learning: some of them were lawyers, perhaps learned in that profession, but of little understanding in religion; few divines, but of less than ordinary sufficiency; the greater number gentlemen or courtiers; and for their dignities some were only titular, and the major part bishops of so small cities, that, supposing every one to represent his people, it could not be said that one of a thousand in Christendom was represented. But particularly of Germany, that there was not so much as one bishop or divine." Father Paul, p. 153.

divines were eminent for their acquirements in Hebrew, and in Talmudical, classical, and oriental literature. Their debates, which were sometimes continued for months upon a single point, were regular scholastic discussions. An appeal was continually made to the Greek and Hebrew originals, to the analogy of faith, and to the opinions of the Rabbinical doctors and early fathers. In these branches of study some of them attained an eminence, which, if ever it has been equalled, has certainly never been excelled. They still shine forth, with singular glory, as stars of the first magnitude. Besides the discussions of the Assembly, which occupied their forenoons, and those of the committee, which filled up their afternoons, the members were many of them employed in preparing dissertations for the parliamentary discourses and other works of great extent, erudition, and learning. When the universities were deserted, in consequence of the removal of the adherents of the king, their places were filled with incumbents selected chiefly from among the members of this Assembly. And while many had asserted that the reputation of these universities was sadly diminished by their new professors, the very contrary is the truth in the case. Learning, religion, and good sense prevailed to a much greater extent at the Restoration, than before the civil wars, in both these seats of learning. All the eminent philosophers and divines, who did so much honour to their country in the three succeeding reigns—the Tillotsons, Stillingfleets, Patricks, Souths, Caves, Sprats, Kidders, Whitbys, Bulls, Boyles, Newtons, and Lockes—were educated by these very professors. And if, as is always allowed, the glory of the scholar illustrates the character of his teacher, we may at once perceive how pre-eminently qualified these men were to be the tutors of the greatest geniuses that have ever adorned humanity.

In foreign countries, also, the reputation of these universities was at this time very high; while the number of learned performances which they produced was as great as during any former period.\* Never certainly was the standard of ministerial qualifications placed higher than by these divines. "The languages, Greek and Hebrew, are," they urged, "necessary to understand the original text, and derive our doctrine from the fresh and pure fountains. The Latin is also needful, that we may the better receive the benefits of the gifts given to the fathers and writers of former ages, (for all gifts are given by God to profit the church withal,) but also to be acquainted with the liberal arts and sciences." After showing how the knowledge of the arts and sciences contribute to the usefulness of the ministry, and how a learned ministry has been in all ages

\*Neal III. 400.

the bulwark of the church against heretics and errorists, they conclude that "therefore the enemies of a learned ministry are the friends of popery and all heresies, of ignorance and blindness, and the enemies of the truth and gospel, of the light and comfort of the church of Jesus Christ."\* The fruits of these principles and labours we find in that harvest of nonconforming ministers who filled the churches at the period of the Restoration, of whom two thousand in England, between three and four thousand in Scotland, and sixty out of sixty-five in Ireland, gave up their livings rather than abandon principle; of whom the world was not worthy; whose works of piety and devotion will ever constitute the staple productions of our Christian literature; and of whom we have a noble succession in those five hundred Presbyterian clergymen and two hundred licentiates and students in divinity in Scotland, who have now taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and suffered even unto poverty, in their glorious contest for the truth and honour of the gospel. Howe and Charnock, Bates and Heyward, and a host of other worthies, exemplify the character of these divines, and the truth of these observations. Without the works of many of these divines, no theological library could be complete, since they contain treatises on various subjects, which are regarded as incomparably the best in the English language.

Neither is this character of the divines of the Westminster Assembly rendered in any degree questionable by the baseless calumnies of Clarendon, or the revengeful vituperation of Milton. By their denunciation of Milton's work on divorce, which led to his being brought before the House of Lords, and by their steady opposition to the constitutional proceedings of his master Cromwell, they excited the deep and keen anger of his fierce antagonist. In this, however, Milton only proved his own inconsistency, and reflected discredit, not on the Assembly, but upon himself. For that very work on divorce had been dedicated by him to this very Assembly. In this dedication, after they had been in session for two years, he denominates them "a select Assembly" "of so much piety and wisdom," "a learned and memorable Synod, in which piety, learning, and prudence were housed." The hireling defamer of political opponents, and the enraged avenger of a private quarrel, are neither of them therefore entitled to vilify a large and respectable Assembly, whose character is otherwise so undoubtedly established.†

\*See Byfield's (a member of the Assembly) *Short Treatise describing the Church of Christ*. London, 1653, p. 26, 27.

†See Orme's *Life of Baxter*, p. 71.



## SECTION III.

## THE STANDARDS OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

But great as were these men in natural genius, and eminent as they were in acquirement and in their literary and theological publications, it is as the authors of those standards which were the fruits of their five years' deliberations, that they most powerfully claim our reverence. The first of these is the Confession of Faith. We have stated that the members of the Assembly had been almost to a man Episcopalians, or at least conformists. The first object of the Assembly was not therefore to overthrow, but to alter and improve, the existing system of polity and doctrine. Accordingly, one of their first acts was to divide their whole body into three committees, to each of which was distributed a certain number of the articles of the English Church. After having spent ten weeks in the revision of the first fifteen articles, they were arrested in their proceedings by an order at once to frame a Directory for public worship; and as it was afterwards thought that uniformity would be better promoted by constructing a new Confession, the further amendment of the thirty-nine Articles was dropped. A committee was therefore appointed to this work in May, 1645, who presented the complete Confession in November, 1646, which after being reviewed and amended was published in May, 1647. The outline of this work would appear to have originated with Alexander Henderson, the leader of what is termed the Second Scottish Reformation, who had been appointed by the General Assembly of Scotland in 1611 to draw up a Confession of Faith, a Catechism, a Directory for all parts of public worship, and a Platform of Government, and who was a commissioner to the Westminster Assembly. In June, 1648, the two houses of Lords and Commons having gone over the whole, article by article, ordered it to be published under the title of "Articles of Religion approved and passed by both houses of Parliament, after advice had with an Assembly of Divines called together by them for that purpose." The whole Confession being immediately transmitted to Scotland, was received with approbation by both the General Assembly and Parliament, and has continued to be the established doctrine of the Church of Scotland until this day, and of all the Presbyterian churches founded by her in England, Ireland, America, and all other parts of the world. This Confession has been embodied almost verbatim in the Confession adopted by the Congregationalists at the Savoy Conference, in their Cambridge and Saybrook platforms, and in the Confessions of the Old South Church in Boston, and other New-England churches; and also by the Calvinistic Baptists.

The next work completed by the Assembly was the reduction of the substance of this Confession into the form of Catechisms; one called "The Larger," for the groundwork of a public exposition in the pulpit, according to the custom of the foreign churches; and the other "The Shorter," for the instruction of children in the principal doctrines of the Christian religion. The Shorter Catechism was presented to parliament in November, 1647, and the Larger in April, 1648. These works are beyond all praise. To those who recognize the system of doctrine they contain as being that taught in the word of God, they must be allowed to be, next to the Bible, the most complete and perfect summaries of evangelical truth that exist; most admirable in their arrangement; simple and scriptural in their language; comprehensive in their details, and masterly in their whole construction. They are, in short, perfect systems of divinity. Beginning with a general introduction, illustrative of the great end of man's creation and the only infallible standard of faith and practice, they are divided into two parts. The first division explains what we are to believe concerning God in himself considered, and in his doings towards the human race, in their creation, fall, and redemption. The second division embraces the duty which God requires of man; in which is given a full explanation of the moral law as contained in the Ten Commandments; and the special duties arising from the gospel dispensation, such as faith, repentance, the diligent use of the means of grace and prayer, as illustrated in the general summary of "The Lord's Prayer." To these catechisms, millions are indebted for their theological knowledge, for their saving piety, and for their preservation from dangerous heresies and errors; while to them, under God, must our church trace her deliverance from many a dangerous onset, and her present establishment in the faith once delivered to the saints.

The next work of the Assembly was the one which gave rise to the greatest debates—that is, the Form of Government. At first no more was thought of than such a modified form of episcopacy as would remove the evils consequent upon the hierarchy. But when the views of the Scottish divines were presented and most elaborately discussed, and a full knowledge was obtained of the working, efficiency, and influence of the Presbyterian system, as practised in the reformed churches, the great majority of the Assembly, *Episcopalians though they had been*, were led to approve of Presbytery as the system of polity instituted by Christ and his apostles. They all, except about eight Independents, (who differed as to the second point,) adopted as of divine right "the two radical principles of Presbyterian church government, the PARITY OF MINISTERS of the Gospel, or the identity of Bishops and Presbyters; and

the regulation of all matters in the church by the counsel and will of the whole body, or their representatives, which comprehends the subordination of inferior to superior judicatories."

Even the Congregationalists in the Assembly embraced almost every thing in this work, and had actually agreed to a compromised view upon which both parties would have been harmoniously united, but for the political influence of Cromwell, for whose interest it was necessary that they should be kept divided.\* This form of government, however, was never fully approved by the parliament, owing to the increased influence of the Independents. Erastian, and Sectarian parties in that body; and the impossibility of harmonizing them all upon the platform of Presbyterianism. It was, however, at once

\*"They both admitted the same orders of office-bearers in the church, though the Independents would have recognized more than the Presbyterians thought either necessary or commanded in Scripture; and they differed little in their opinions respecting the powers properly inherent in congregations." (Hetherington. p. 165.) Mr. Nye, the leader of the Independents, admitted that they held classical and synodical meetings very useful and profitable, yea, possibly agreeable to the institution of Christ: but the question is this, whether these meetings have the same power that ecclesia prima, or one single congregation has? (Lightfoot. p. 144.) The compromise above alluded to, was brought in by a committee raised for the purpose, and composed of Messrs. Seaman, Vines, Palmer, Marshall Godwin, Nye, Burroughs, and Bridge, together with the four Scottish divines, and was as follows: "1. That there be a presbytery, or meeting of the elders of many neighbouring congregations, to consult upon such things as concern those congregations in matters ecclesiastical; and such presbyteries are the ordinances of Christ, having his power and authority. 2. Such presbyteries have power in cases that are to come before them, to declare and determine doctrinally what is agreeable to God's word: and this judgment of theirs is to be received with reverence and obligation as Christ's ordinance. 3. They have power to require the elders of those congregations to give an account of any thing scandalous in doctrine or practice." (Lightfoot, p. 214, 215.) Another report was brought forward from this committee about a week afterwards, containing two additional propositions, forming five in all, as follows: "4. The churches and eldership being offended, let them examine, admonish, and in case of obstinacy, declare them either disturbers of the peace, as subverters of the faith, or otherwise, as the nature and degree of the offence shall require. 5. In case that the particular church or eldership shall refuse to reform that scandalous doctrine or practice, then that meeting of elders, which is assembled from several churches and congregations, shall acquaint their several congregations respectively, and withdraw from them and deny church communion and fellowship with them." (Lightfoot. p. 229.) In the course of their argument and illustrations, the dissenting brethren, that is, the Congregationalists, made so many concessions, that it is rather difficult to conceive on what their final opposition rested. As, for instance, they admitted "that synods are an ordinance of God upon all occasions of difficulty: that all the churches of a province may call a single congregation to account; that they may examine and admonish, and, in case of obstinacy, may declare them to be subverters of the faith; that they have authority to determine in controversies of faith; that they may deny church communion to an offending and obstinate congregation, and that this sentence of non-communication may be enforced by the authority of the civil magistrate; and that they may call before them any person within their bounds concerned in the ecclesiastical business before them, and may hear and determine such causes as orderly come before them." *Reasons and Answers of Dissenting Brethren*, page 138.



adopted in the Church of Scotland, and has been perpetuated in all her branches.

The next work for which we are indebted to the divines of the Westminster Assembly is the Directory for public Worship. As early as October, 1643, the parliament, having virtually abolished the liturgy, directed the Assembly to prepare "a Directory of Worship or Liturgy, hereafter to be in the Church," with all the convenient speed they could. The Directory was accordingly drawn up and, after much discussion, was almost unanimously adopted. It contains a directory for prayer, with the substance of what ought to be included in the public morning prayer; for the reading of the Scriptures; for the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; for preaching the word, the sanctification of the Lord's day, the solemnization of marriage, the observance of days of public fasting and humiliation, and also of thanksgiving, and for the burial of the dead. In the change then made in the form of public worship, the following things before in use were entirely omitted, viz., the public reading of the Apocrypha in the churches, private and lay-baptism, god-fathers and god-mothers, the sign of the cross in baptism, and the private administration of the communion to the sick. The altar with rails was exchanged for the communion table, kneeling at the Lord's table was disused, burial service, the ring in marriage, all peculiar garments for officiating ministers, and saint's days, were also discarded.

To the Assembly, also, we are indebted for a metrical version of the Book of Psalms to be used in the public worship of God, and for the general introduction of congregational psalmody.\*

\*Milner's Life of Watts, p. 358. "The practice of the primitive church was thus revived. The people were, as Secker expressed it, 'restored to their rights, and taught to sing as well as to pray.'" The mode of singing psalms in measured verse, as now practised, was introduced first by Calvin at Geneva, in 1543. He wrote the preface to Marot's metrical version of the Psalms, and took care to have them set to music by the most distinguished musicians. The whole Psalms with music, were first printed at Geneva in 1553. From that church the practice went forth into all the reformed churches in France, and was introduced into England by the Presbyterians, who resided at Geneva, and established an English church there during the *Marian persecution*. The English exiles, while at Geneva, commenced and completed a translation of the Scriptures into the English language. The principal translators were Miles Coverdale, Christopher Goodman, John Knox, Anthony Gilby or Gibbs, Thomas Sampson, William Cole, and William Whittingham. They divided the chapters into verses, and added notes in the margin, and also tables, maps, &c., and published it with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, in 1560. The Psalms, versified and set to music as in the church of Geneva, were annexed to this Bible. This version has been known as that of Sternhold and Hopkins. The initials of the name of the versifier were prefixed to each Psalm. Thus the Psalms versified in English came into England, and were allowed to be sung before the morning and evening service; and at length they were published with this declaration: *Psalms set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches, before and after morning and evening Prayer, as also be-*



This version was composed by Mr. Francis Rous, who was one of the lay-members appointed to sit in the Assembly. Although this work was far from being satisfactory, it was adopted as the best then made, both by the Assembly and by the Church of Scotland, where it is still used. In England and America this version has given place to the far more scriptural and proper version of Watts and others; while in Scotland repeated efforts have been made to improve their existing psalmody. In their Directory, however, under the head "Of the Singing of Psalms," the Assembly do not confine the churches to this version, nor to any version of the *Psalms* merely, since they expressly teach that "it is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms or hymns," thus distinctly condemning the modern exclusiveness of those who would prohibit Christians from using in the worship of God any hymns or new songs adapted to the dispensation of the Gospel under which we live. And that this was really the sentiment of the Assembly is made manifest by the very early and constant efforts of the Church of Scotland to provide other scriptural *hymns* for the use of her churches, and by her adoption of more than a hundred such hymns, which are now authorized and in use in that church.\*

Such is a rapid summary of the immediate doings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, as the ecclesiastical council of the Long Parliament. Composed of some of the most liberal and learned spirits of the age, and conducted with more wisdom than any other council in any other age, it has given birth to the most complete standards ever framed, furnished the world with some of the most valuable works which have ever been composed by uninspired men, and communicated a general impetus to the cause of education, which is still felt, and thus led to the exaltation of the ministerial office and qualifications.

"By these," says Mr. Aiton, alluding to the Westminster formularies, "these divines have erected a monument in almost every heart in Scotland. For two hundred years these have withstood the attacks of infidelity, and even many severe wounds from the hands of their friends: yet is the Confession of Faith, unshaken as the rock of ages, still found, on a Sabbath afternoon, in the hands of our peasantry, dear to them

*fore and after Sermons.* And in a short time they superseded the *Te Deum*, *Benedicite*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc dimittis*, which had been retained from the Romish church. Bayle, Art. Marot. Neal, p. 109. Heylin, p. 213. 214. Rees' Cy. Art. Bible. Burnet, p. 290. Waterman's Life of Calvin, p. 403.

\*The secession church formerly took the same view, since all the hymns and metrical versions of Ezekiel (or, as they would now call them, paraphrases) were prepared by him, at the request of the secession synod, and with a view to their adoption in the public worship of God. See Works of Ralph Erskine, Vol. X.

almost as their Bible; and the Catechism, carried morning after morning, by our sons and our daughters, to the parish school, (the plan of which Henderson devised,) that their contents may enlighten the minds, and spiritualize the nature of the rising generation. Next to the introduction of Christianity itself into Scotland, and the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, the framing of the Confession of our Faith and of the Catechisms has conferred the greatest boon on every Christian in our country."§

But we are not only indebted to this Assembly for these positive blessings, but also for an indirect and most triumphant proof of the truth of Presbyterian doctrine and polity. It has often been denied that the Articles of the Church of England were designed to be understood in a Calvinistic sense, or that Calvinism was the first and long established standard of doctrinal orthodoxy in that church. To our minds the evidence in proof of both these positions is overwhelmingly great. And in the fact that ALL THE REFORMED CHURCHES, in every part of the world, without collusion or consultation, by the study of the Scriptures alone, were led to the adoption of those doctrines, now termed Calvinistic from their greatest advocate and defender, we find an unanswerable presumption in favour of the scripturality and divine origin of these tenets. For on what other supposition can this perfect harmony of so many confessions, differing on other points, be possibly accounted for, and especially when we remember that these doctrines are, and ever will be, most discordant to the natural reason, and unpalatable to the natural feelings of man? Look also at this Westminster Assembly, composed of different parties, of laymen and ministers, of politicians and divines, convened from every portion of the land, and generally unknown to each other. And yet in that whole body it does not appear that there was one single individual who dissented from any of those doctrines which are included under the Calvinistic system. There was not among them all one Arminian or Antinomian, much less one Unitarian or Pelagian. The same is true in a great degree of the parliament itself. Even among the many hundred noblemen and gentlemen who constituted that body, we do not find a single infidel, Unitarian, Pelagian, or even Arminian.\* They were

§Life of Alexander Henderson, p. 468.

\*On March 22d, 1648, a conference was held between the two houses, to compare their opinions respecting the Confession of Faith, the result of which is thus stated by Cushforth: "The Commons this day (March 22d) at a conference presented the Lords with the Confession of Faith passed by them with some alterations, viz., That they do agree with their lordships, and so with the Assembly, in the doctrinal part, and desire the same may be made public, that this kingdom, and all the Reformed churches of Christendom may see the parliament of England differ not in doctrine." Hetherington, 244, 245.

all, or nearly all, the stanch friends of orthodoxy. So that for the truth of our doctrinal standards we have the universal testimony of the ablest, wisest, and best men, both at the period of the Reformation, and in an age which has been justly styled the glory of England and the golden age of literature.

Equally remarkable is the fact that these bodies, *almost to a man Episcopalian by birth and education*, should, after long, minute, and impartial investigation, reject the scriptural claims of prelacy, and adopt those principles denominated presbytery, as the truly scriptural and primitive polity. In the main features and principles of this system, there was no difference of opinion, either in the Assembly or in the parliament. That there is but one order of the Christian ministry, called indiscriminately presbyters or bishops, ordained by Christ and his apostles, and found in the truly primitive church, ALL, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WERE CONSTRAINED TO BELIEVE. On this ground, Presbyterians, Independents, and Erastians all stood without wavering or doubt. On the subject of divine right, the power of presbyteries, synods and assemblies, and of ruling elders, there were, it is true, differences of views, as there are at this moment, in the bosom of the Presbyterian church, as well as out of it. The Erastians denied the spiritual independence of the church, and her right to govern ecclesiastically, free from all interference on the part of the state. The Independents denied the propriety of *stated and regular* judicatories, though they allowed the Scripturality of Synods and Presbyteries, *whenever necessary*. But in the great fundamental principle which divides prelatists from all other denominations, every member of the Assembly and every member of the parliament were fully agreed. Is there not, then, great weight in this fact? And when connected with the *unanimous* judgment of all the reformed churches, and the opinions of some of the greatest divines in every age, from that period up to the time of the apostles, does it not demonstrate that the orders of the hierarchy originated not in Scripture, but in custom and the policy of man?

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#### SECTION IV.

##### THE POLITICAL SENTIMENTS AND CHARACTER OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND ITS ADHERENTS.

But we pass on to remark, that in an age of distraction, anarchy, and wild excess, the Westminster Assembly, and the party which adhered to them and to their principles, formed the conservative influence by which peace, order, and truth were maintained, and would have been, if possible, preserved. They were men of liberal views, but they were not latitudinarian.

They were consecrated to the cause of freedom, but they sought it in the establishment of constitutional rights, and not in the destruction of the constitution. They were attached to the British government of kings, lords, and commons, and believing that it only required reform to be stable, just, and free, they regarded as unwise, dangerous, and chimerical, the attempt to establish upon its *ruins* a system of military despotism, or agrarian democracy. They desired a republic in which the president should be elective or hereditary, with the name of king; and in which the force of the democracy and of the nobility should be equally subject to check. They were, in short, conservatives, and not radicals. They opposed, therefore, to a man, the execution of the king. They openly denounced the usurpation by Cromwell of all prerogative and authority. They protested against the *encouragement* which was given to error, heresy, and schism. And they aimed at the union of the whole British Empire in a common bond of Protestant harmony.

Looking back upon the eventful history of those times, and the calamitous results of the wild, ungovernable reign of mere popular license which succeeded, we can see that they were correct. The British people were not prepared, either for subjection to a military despotism, for the freedom and self-government of a republic, or for the unrestrained exercise of an unbridled liberty. Had the party connected with the Assembly prevailed, instead of having been early defeated and overwhelmed, the lamentable consequences would not have ensued. A republican monarchy would have been established, which might have ripened, ere this, into a constitutional republic. The reign of anarchy, confusion, and blood, would have been prevented. The nation would not have fallen a prey to intestine feuds, and to the voracious maws of innumerable sects. The tide of liberty, which had been for years swelling in its onward flow, would not have been driven back within the channels of arbitrary power. The sun of freedom, which had shown so brightly, would not have gone down before noonday. A disastrous eclipse would not have so soon obscured the hopes of the nation, and buried them again in the darkness of absolute despotism, civil and ecclesiastical. Those ages of licentiousness, formality, persecution, and cruelty, would not have followed, which converted England into the home of infidelity, scattered her pious children, and drove them into exile, and deluged every mountain-pass and deep ravine of Scotland with the blood of martyred Covenanters. Thanks to God, these efforts of the enemy were unavailing! The precious spark of liberty which the Puritans alone had kindled, was still preserved with the blood of its slaughtered friends, and has burst forth in that freedom which now characterizes the English con-



stitution, and which shines forth in unclouded brilliance in this land of liberty. And when it is recollected what Presbytery has done for Scotland, compared with what Prelacy has done for England; and in Ireland what Presbytery has effected for Ulster, compared with what Episcopacy has accomplished for the other provinces of that unhappy country, who, it has been truly asked, will venture to conclude that the evils which now threaten to overthrow the Protestant establishments in Britain, might not have been avoided, had the Presbyterian polity been universally established.\*

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#### SECTION V.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND THE PRESBYTERIANS OF THEIR TIME VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF PERSECUTION.

But it is said this Presbyterian party were intolerant and persecuting. Doubtless it is so decreed, for their enemies alone have been their historians, and vilification and abuse their only monument. But have they received justice at the hands of posterity? Far from it. Their true history has yet to be written. Not that they were free from fault—they were men. Not that they had imbibed those views of universal toleration which are the glory of the present age—they lived in the seventeenth century. Not that we can *palliate*, much less *justify*, whatever in their course was inconsistent with the most perfect liberty of opinion and practice. We make no such apology. But we demand an arrest of judgment. We ask that they shall be tried by the standard of their own age, and the opinions of the men of that age. Trained within the precincts of a state church, they retained much of its spirit, and acted, as axiomatically true, upon many of its evil maxims. By these false principles they were misled—some of them far and widely. They admitted the right and power of the magistrate to interfere with the church, to establish and control her external movements, and thus to establish a uniformity of worship. And hence believing, as they did, that Presbytery was by divine right the polity of the church of Christ, they sought that the civil power should give its sanction of EXCLUSIVE approbation to this system. They protested against the state,—after having bound itself to the cause of Presbyterianism by solemn league and covenant,—recognizing and *encouraging* the innumerable sects which then sprung into existence, from the prolific hot-bed of superstition and ignorance, exposed to the full influence of a licentious and unrestrained license. They could not believe that it was proper that all men should have unlimited free-

\*Presb. Review, March, 1836, p. 27.

dom to proclaim sentiments however blasphemous and revolting, and to practice, as acts of worship, immoralities and indecencies too gross to be detailed.\* Against a *positive and judicial sanction* to these things, on the part of government, they did solemnly protest. It being ON ALL HANDS AGREED that it was the province of the state to adjudicate on this matter, the Presbyterian party argued that it was one thing "not to compel men to come in, and another thing to open the door for the encouragement of error, and to inscribe over it "all kinds of heresies, schisms, and blasphemies, publicly allowed and tolerated here." And who will deny that this conclusion follows inevitably FROM THE PREMISES THEN UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED? For if it is the right and duty of the state to *establish* and defend religion, then is the state *bound* to enforce only that system which is true, and to discountenance and condemn all other forms of religion. And since the parliament had established the Presbyterian faith and discipline, it was consistently required to patronize it alone. The error was in the *principle* acted upon, which, however, all avouched as correct, and not in the conclusion deduced from it, and which was reprobated only by the party it excluded. The Assembly having been constituted the advisory council of the parliament, and having been led to the conclusion that the Presbyterian system was by divine right, were of necessity impelled to seek the recognition of that divine right on the part of the parliament.

But there was another privilege and right which they claimed for the church, and that was her spiritual independence, in all ecclesiastical matters, upon all civil authority whatsoever. This doctrine has ever been dear to Scottish Presbyterians. The history of that country for nearly a century and a half after the overthrow of Popery, presents a series of struggles unexampled in severity and number, to protect and to rescue it from Erastian encroachments. To surrender it to these was deemed no less than treason to Christ, and the taking of the crown from his head. The sense entertained of its importance, and the ardor of the people's attachment to it were such, that many submitted to bonds, and to the loss of goods and of life, for its sake. The names of the Scottish martyrs, from the era of the Reformation downwards, are one and all associated with its maintenance. The very peasantry of the land understood it—defended it—died for it. And during those twenty-eight years of national suffering which preceded the memorable revolution, the fundamental question in the great controversy upheld by our ancestors against the fearful odds of unprincipled and cruel despotism, was no other than the Headship of Christ,

\*McCrie's Scott. Hist. p. 307, 308, 310. Hetherington, Hist. of Ch. of Scot., p. 340.

and the liberty and spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland. "The day," says that great man, John Welsh of Ayre, when writing from his prison at Blackness, "on which I should be offered up as a sacrifice for these truths, now the special cause of our imprisonment,—that Christ is Head of His Church, and that she is free of all jurisdiction but His—I should consider the most glorious day and gladdest hour I ever saw in my life.\*

Now this was the great fundamental principle for which the Assembly and the Presbyterian party contended, as even Neal admits. And to show that they were in earnest in maintaining it, they nobly determined, like their present followers, the Free Church of Scotland, that they would not comply with the existing establishment until it was delivered from the yoke of the civil magistrate.

Such were the views embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith; imbedded in the Covenants; and which constituted the rallying motto on the banners of the blue. Such was that church power which the Presbyterians were so anxious to secure, and which has been magnified into a civil authority over men's persons and properties. It had nothing to do with either. It was purely ecclesiastical and spiritual. It is what every church in this country at this moment possesses, the power of conducting its own affairs and exercising its own discipline, according to its own rules and the dictates of Scripture. Now the claim of this power and the consequent right to keep back scandalous and unworthy persons from the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, was the very head and front of their offending. This constituted the great point

\*Mr. Thomas Forrester, in 1674, when minister of Alva, gave in a paper to the brethren of the exercise, wherein he stated that the "two powers, civil and ecclesiastic, are distinct *toto genere*, both as to the original, the subject-matter, and the manner of working, and the nearest end designed,—consequently, that THEY ARE CO-ORDINATE, NOT SUBORDINATE ONE TO ANOTHER. That these were kept also distinct—distinct limits being put betwixt them, both in the Old and New Testaments; under the law, a standing priesthood and spiritual sanhedrim established, who were to meddle with matters of the Lord, distinct from matters of the king: that the judgment on Saul and Uzzias was for going beyond their limit: and that, under the New Testament, the Lord Jesus, the king, head, and lawgiver of his church, hath a visible kingdom which he exerciseth in and over the church visible by its spiritual office-bearers given to it as a church; and therefore distinct from, and *independent upon, the civil power*, the keys of the kingdom of heaven being by him committed not to the magistrate, but to the apostles' successors in the work of the ministry. That as it is clear that this spiritual power was at first committed to church officers, when no magistrate was so much as a member thereof, and consequently to be exercised then independently upon him, so it is as clear that our Lord hath commanded the exercise of this power *as intrinsic in the church, whether the magistrate be friend or enemy*, upon moral perpetual grounds, till he come again."—*Wodrow's History*, II., 254.

Mr. Forrester was deposed. He survived the revolution, however; and became Principal of the new College of St. Andrews.

in dispute between the Assembly and the parliament. The latter passed a law by which an *ultimate* appeal was, *in every case*, given from the ecclesiastical to the civil tribunals; and by which church courts might be *compelled* to admit and retain in the church the most unworthy members. Against this the whole Presbyterian party protested—and were they not right? The recognition of their exclusive scriptural claims, which the parliament had in effect allowed, and of the spiritual independence of the church upon the state, this was all that they desired, and with less than which they refused to be satisfied.‡

But the annexation of civil penalties did not enter into the claim of the Presbyterians in their doctrine of the divine right of Presbytery. They did not ask to wield the power of the sword, nor the enforcement of uniformity by civil pains. The church, even in Scotland, and in the full plenitude of its power, never did persecute. Expressions indeed may be found which, *as now understood*, breathe the spirit of intolerance. But it cannot be shown that, with the consent and approbation of the public authorities, the covenant was ever *forced* upon any, or that the loss of liberty or of goods was incurred by its refusal.§ Such as refused to take the covenant were indeed, in many cases, excluded from places of power and trust. But was not this treatment demanded by a regard to the high interests at stake; to their own safety; and to those maxims of prudence by which, in similar circumstances, all people are led most carefully to distinguish such as approve, from those who oppose their interests? In such a season of national danger and alarm, when all that was dear to the soul was put in jeopardy, who could expect the Presbyterians to intrust *their enemies* with offices of power and trust? National religion, safety, liberty and peace forbade. And if such exclusion was intolerant, then is every government and society now intolerant, since they exclude from office such as are disqualified by their opposing views to fill them?\*

Beyond this, however, they did not go, and even to this length the greater part were unwillingly driven. "How can we," say they, in their defence of their church government,

‡See their own statements in "The Divine Right of Church Government," 1645. Pref. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, in the work, pp. 2, 4, 7, 43, 45, 67. Also McCrie's Scott. Church Hist., p. 303. Aiton's Life of Henderson, pp. 558-565. Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming, Dedication to the Assembly, and Preface to the Reader. A Model of Church Government, by John Drury, one of the Assembly of Div. Pref.

§Dr. McCrie on Unity of the Church, p. 162. Hetherington's Hist. of Ch. of Scot., p. 341. McCrie's Scott. Ch. Hist., p. 212.

\*Let it be borne in mind, that with all this outcry about the intolerance of the Assembly, the Confession of Faith it drew up was never made a legal standard of orthodoxy—it was never enforced as a term of Christian communion, nor ever enjoined upon all ministers for forty years after its adoption. Neal, III., 329.



"tyrannize over any, or in what respects? Not over their states; for, we claim no secular power at all over men's states, by fines, mulcts, penalties, forfeitures, or confiscations. Not over their bodies, for we inflict no corporal punishment, by banishment, imprisonment, branding, slitting, cropping, striking, whipping, dismembering or killing; not over their souls, for them we desire by this government to gain, (Matt. 18: 15,) to edify, (2 Cor. 10: 8, and 13: 10,) and to save, (1 Cor. 5: 5.) Only this government ought to be impartial and severe against sin, that the flesh may be destroyed, (1 Cor. 5: 5.) It is only destructive to corruption, which is deadly and destructive to the soul. Thus the imputation itself of arbitrariness or tyrannicalness to the Presbyterian government is unjust and causeless."†

Such sentiments as the following were also frequently expressed by them in their public sermons. "Fierce and furious prosecution, even of a good cause, is rather prejudice than promotion. We must tenaciously adhere to all divine truths ourselves, and, with out wisest moderation, plant and propagate them in others. Opposites, indeed, must be opposed, gainsaid, reclaimed; but all must be done in a way, and by the means, appointed from heaven. It is one thing to show moderation to pious, peaceable, and tender consciences; it is another thing to proclaim beforehand toleration to impious, fiery, and unpeaceable opinions."\* The true sentiments of the Presbyterian party and of the Assembly, may be further seen from the following extracts from Baillie, one of their number: "As for the Church of Scotland, that it did ever intermeddle to trouble any in their goods, liberties, or persons, is very false. What civil penalties the parliament of a kingdom thinks meet to inflict upon those who are refractory and unamenable by the censures of a church, the state from whom alone these punishments do come, are answerable, and not the church. That excommunication in Scotland is inflicted on those who cannot assent to every point of religion determined in their confession, there is nothing more untrue; for we know it well, that never any person in Scotland was excommunicated only for his difference of opinion in a theological tenet. Excommunication there is a very dreadful sentence, and therefore very rare. These last forty years, so far as I have either seen or heard, there has none at all been excommunicated in Scotland but some few trafficking Papists, and some very notoriously flagitious persons, and five or six of you the prelates for your obstinate impenitence, after your overturning the foundations both of our church and state." In another work, published about the same

†Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici. Pref., p. 10.

\*Hetherington, 287.

time, he says, "If once the government of Christ were set up amongst us, as it is in the rest of the reformed churches, we know not what would impede it, by the sword of God alone, without any secular violence, to banish out of the land these spirits of error in all meekness, humility, and love, by the force of truth, convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Put these holy and divine instruments into the hands of the Church of England, by the blessing of God thereupon, the sole and great evil of so many heresies and schisms, shall quickly be cured, which now not only troubles the peace and welfare, but hazards the very subsistence both of church and kingdom; without this mean, the state will toil itself in vain about the cure of such spiritual diseases."

"The Presbyterian party," says Baxter,\* "consisted of grave, orthodox, godly ministers, together with the hopefulest of the students and young ministers, and the soberest, godly, ancient Christians, WHO WERE EQUALLY AVERSE TO PERSECUTION AND TO SCHISM; and of those young ones who were educated and ruled by these; as, also, of the soberest sort of the well-meaning vulgar, who liked a godly life, though they had no great knowledge of it. THIS PARTY WAS MOST DESIROUS OF PEACE."

Whatever may have been the rash expressions or improper language of any individual among them, we can prove the kind and liberal conduct of the Presbyterians by the testimony of an Episcopalian of eminence. "Whatever," says Dr. John Edwards, "may be thought of the principles of the Presbyterians on the subject of toleration, IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THEIR PRACTICE, WHEN IN POWER, WAS MARKED BY THE MOST EXEMPLARY FORBEARANCE. The Presbyterian party (though the Assembly of Divines, the representative body of the city, the Court of Common Council, the ministry of the kingdom, thousands and tens of thousands of godly, well-affected persons, the kingdom of Scotland, yea, all the reformed churches, own that way) *in their love and forbearance to the sectaries hath been admirable*. When the Independents were but few, and other sectaries a small number, some half a score or dozen ministers, with three hundred or four hundred people, the Presbyterians gave them the right hand of fellowship, admitted them to their meetings, opened their pulpit-doors to them, showed all brotherly respect to them, even more than to most of their own way; and notwithstanding breach of agreements, drawing away their people, and many and strange carriages, yet still using all fairness and love, hoping by brotherly kindness, forbearance, and a thorough reformation in the church, (wherein they have

\*Orme's Life of, p. 81.

been willing, upon all occasions, to gratify and have respect unto their consciences,) at last to have gained them.”\*

It is also to be remembered, that whatever was intolerant in the spirit or language of the Presbyterian party, was openly disavowed by some of its most eminent divines, as for instance, by Howe,† and Baxter.‡

But the injustice with which the charge of intolerance is made so exclusively against the Presbyterians of this period, will be still further apparent by comparing them with the Independents. We have no wish to derogate from the just praise which is due to this body for their efforts to promote civil and religious liberty. Posterity is, and ever will be, under deep and lasting obligations to them. But that they are *peculiarly* entitled to gratitude on this account, or more so than their Presbyterian brethren, we are not prepared to admit.

It is not true, as is generally supposed, that the great principle of religious toleration *originated* with the Independents. It was promulgated in its germ by many of the reformers who were Presbyterian. Luther taught that “the church ought not to force persons to believe, nor to animadvert capitally on those who follow a different religion,” “that to believe is something free, yea, divine, being the fruit of the Spirit, wherefore it cannot and ought not to be forced by any external violence.” Zuingle declared that “it is at once contrary to the gospel and to reason, to employ violent measures to extort a confession contrary to conscience. Reason and persuasion are the arms that a Christian ought to employ.” Calvin declared that, “though it may be wrong to form friendship or intimacy with those who hold pernicious opinions, yet must we contend against them only by exhortations, by kindly instructions, by clemency, by mildness, by prayers to God, that they may be so changed as to bear good fruits, and be restored to the unity of the church. And not only are erring Christians to be so treated, but even Turks and Saracens.” Similar sentiments were also expressed by Knox, Melville, and other eminent Presbyterian reformers. But they were not the sentiments of their age, nor was their age prepared to receive them. They sowed, however, the seed which others reaped. They imbedded these principles in their ecclesiastical constitutions, and in their doctrine of civil government and the function of the magistrate. And it is to Calvinism and Presbyterianism we owe all those controversies and civil commotions which gave birth to the modern republics, and diffused so widely the principles of toleration and freedom.

\*See also Lorimer's Manual of Presbytery, p. 230.

†Works, Vol. IV., 433, and Rogers's Life of, I., 358-364.

‡In Neal, Vol. IV., p. 73.

In short, to the bonds, covenants, or leagues, adopted by the Protestants in Germany and France, and by the Protestant nobility and gentry in Scotland, before its reformation;—to the covenant entered into in the form of a national deed in Scotland in 1580, and again in 1638;—and to the Solemn League and Covenant so generally adopted in both England and Scotland, in 1643;—the fathers of our Revolution, were indebted for the idea, nature, form, and much of the very wording of the celebrated Declaration of our national Independence. National reformation and uniformity were combined with national liberty, safety, peace, and law, in these holy bonds, by which the confederates pledged to one another their lives, their property, and their sacred honor, by solemn oath to the Most High God. Let any one read and compare these several deeds with the Declaration of Independence, and they will be led to conclude that to these men, vilified and abused as they are, this country and the world must look as the very source and fountain of their priceless liberties.

These principles, be it remembered, had been stated and theoretically enforced, when the Independents found Presbyterianism about to be established, and themselves excluded. It was *then* they laid hold of this sheet-anchor of religious toleration, and *in self-defence* pressed it upon the attention of the public. And the truth is, that it was by this very war of opinions, and this strife of interests, the great doctrine of religious toleration was developed. It was by this means at length made manifest that there was no alternative between universal toleration and spiritual despotism. Amid the storm and tempest of the wrath and contention of men, this bow of promise rose upon our afflicted world, and gave assurance that in future men of every creed might dwell together in peace and unity.

The Independents, however, were no more harmonious in their sentiments on this subject, or consistent in their practice, than were Presbyterians. Did they not make the peculiar constitution of the church, *as laid down by them*, an article of faith appertaining to salvation, and thus unchurch and excommunicate all other denominations?\*. Did they not, in their famous Apologetical Narrative, declare that “they give to the magistrates power, as much, and, as they think, MORE than the principles of the Presbyterial government will suffer them to yield?”† Did not Dr. Owen, in a sermon preached before the House of Commons, thus present their doctrine on the subject of toleration?‡ “Some, perhaps,” says he, “by a *toleration*

\*See numerous proofs in Paget’s Defence of Presb. Ch. Gov’t., p. 33. As to the lengths to which they went, Bostwick’s Utter Routing—Epistle to the Reader.

†See in Dr. McCrie on the Unity of the Church, p. 153.

‡Printed in 1646, p. 66, in Hetherington, p. 286.



understand an *universal, uncontrolled license* of living as you please in things concerning religion: that every one may be *let alone*, and not so much as discountenanced in doing, speaking, acting, how, what, where, or when he pleaseth, in all such things as concerneth the worship of God, articles of belief, or generally any thing commanded in religion. And in the mean time, the parties at variance, and litigant about differences, freely to revile, reject, and despise one another, according as their provoked genius shall dispose their minds thereunto. Now, truly, though every one of this mind pretend to cry for mercy to be extended unto poor afflicted *Truth*, yet I cannot but be persuaded, that such a *toleration* would prove exceeding pernicious to all sorts of men." Did not the Independents accept sequestered livings from which even Presbyterians were ejected, as freely, to say the least, as Presbyterians had ever done?‡ "When, upon the death of the king, the government of England was changed to a commonwealth, an ordinance was passed appointing an engagement to be taken, first by all civil and military officers, and afterwards by all who held official situations in the universities; and at last it was further ordered, that no minister be capable of enjoying any preferment in the church, unless he should, within six months, take the engagement publicly before a congregation. The consequence of this was, that while the engagement was readily taken by all the sectarians, and by many Episcopalians of lax principles, it was refused by great numbers of the Presbyterians, several of whom were in a short time ejected from the situations to which they had been appointed by the parliament. Cromwell and his council, carrying into full execution this course of procedure, certainly not that of *toleration*, immediately placed Independents in the situations thus rendered vacant by the ejection of the Presbyterians, prohibited the publication of pamphlets censuring the conduct of the new government, and abolished the monthly fasts, which had continued to be regularly kept for about seven years, and whose sacred influence had often been deeply and beneficially felt by both parliament and assembly."

During the reign of Cromwell, when the Independents were in chief power, were not many of the existing sects, such as the Levellers, the Fifth-Monarchy men, the Socinians, the Antinomians, the Quakers, &c., *forcibly* suppressed?\* Did not the leading Independent ministers bring before the committee of triers, in 1654, a series of requests, in the form of a representation, one article of which was as follows:† "That this honor-

‡Dr. Lang's *Relig. and Educ. in America*, p. 125, and Hetherington, p. 269.

\*Hetherington, p. 286.

†Neal, Vol. II., p. 621, 622.

able committee be desired to propose to the parliament, that such who do not receive those principles of religion, without acknowledgment whereof the Scriptures do clearly and plainly affirm that salvation is not to be obtained, as those formerly complained of by the ministers, may not be suffered to preach or promulgate any thing in opposition unto such principles." And when, in consequence of this representation, it was agreed "that all should be tolerated who professed the fundamentals of Christianity," and a committee of divines, including Goodwin, Nye, and other Independents, were appointed to draw up a list of fundamental articles, did they not present such an enumeration as effectually to exclude from all toleration Deists, Papists, Socinians, Arians, Antinomians, Quakers, and even Arminians?‡ Did not their mightiest champions, and the great teachers of the doctrine of toleration, and that, too, while discussing this very subject, exclude Romanists from any possible toleration?\* And had the Independents been in a similar majority with the Presbyterians, and possessed the same power, would they have been as willing to tolerate as were these same Presbyterians? Let Dr. John Edwards answer. "I am confidently persuaded," says this writer, "and so I believe are all wise men that have observed the ways of the sectaries, that if they had been in the place of the Presbyterians, having had their power, number, authority, and the Presbyterians had been a small number as they were, and should have offered to have done but the twentieth part of that in preaching, writing, &c., which the sectaries have done against the Presbyterians, they would have trod them down as mire in the street, casting them out in scorn before this time of day, nor have suffered a Presbyterian to preach among us, or to have been in any place or office, military or civil, but all would have been shut up in prison, banished, or else hiding themselves in holes and corners; many godly persons, in some places, having much ado now to hold up their heads to live by them, to preach quietly, to go safely in the streets, or to be quiet in their houses." And if this testimony is not sufficient, then we would point to the New England colonies, where Independency, as it was then termed, did attain to absolute power, and to the actual persecution and intolerance which was long practised among them, as demonstrative proof that Independents can lay no peculiar claim to an early practice of toleration, nor boast themselves over their Presbyterian brethren.

Shall we now compare the conduct of the Presbyterians with that of Prelatists, both previously and subsequently to these

‡Ibid., Vol. II., p. 621, 622.

\*Milton's Prose Works, Vol. IV., 264, 265—"Of True Religion," &c. Locke on Toleration, in Works, Vol. II., 342, 343, 4to ed.

times? But will they endure a moment's comparison? "Supposing," to use the words of the Edinburgh Review,\* "that the republican religionists of those days had been more unconciliatory to their spiritual opponents than the members of the Church of England,—supposing that they had imprisoned, and mutilated, and butchered greater numbers,—even *then* would it be a gross injustice to brand their intolerance with as much moral turpitude. Despotic cruelty, and retaliation, is each to be ranked as a crime in our moral codes; but assuredly as a crime of higher or lower gradation than the other. Wantonness and cold-blooded deliberation enhance the guilt of the one; the partial infusion of justice and the hurry of passion diminish the guilt of the other. And be it remembered that these were the precise moral distinctions of the Episcopalian and Republican. The former had haughtily trampled down, without any necessity, all who dared to dissent from their pretensions; the latter, when the hour of requital came, had higher reasons for gratifying their vengeance. We are far—very far—from exculpating the Presbyterians; they would have shown a glorious magnanimity and a Christian piety in overlooking wrongs; but, nevertheless, we must protest against their being equalized with their foes." It would be idle in us to say that the opponents of the Church of England were in "no instances intolerant. Education, passion, kept many of them ignorant of the true principles of civil and religious liberty. But it is beyond bearing, that party-spirit should make a man so purblind to facts, and so self-contradictory, as to prompt him to institute any thing like a comparison between the intolerance of Charles I. and the intolerance of" his opponents.

"That during the Protectorate," continues the Review, "there were many instances of unrighteous oppression; that there were numerous sequestrations of the Episcopal clergy, which were most indefensible, must be admitted. But the calm observer of these times will perceive, that *revenge*, not *religious intolerance*, caused such proceedings: and, INASMUCH AS THE LEADING MINISTERS OF RELIGION HAD NO PART IN THESE RETALIATIONS, THEY ARE NOT TO BE URGED AGAINST THEM AS PROOFS OF RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL INSINCERITY."

But who, we further ask, were the Episcopal ministers who were thus ejected, and on what grounds were they thus treated? "They cast out," says Baxter,† "the grosser sort of insufficient and scandalous clergy, and some few civil men, that had acted in the wars for the king; but left in near one-half of those that were but barely tolerable." He further states, "that in the

\*Oct. 1836, p. 53.

†Dr. A. Alexander's Hist. of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, p. 142.

counties where he was acquainted, *six to one* of the sequestered ministers were, by the oaths of witnesses, proved insufficient, or scandalous, or both." This ejectionment, then, does not admit of a comparison with that which took place at the restoration, for non-conformity. In this case, the principal ground was either political, because they were considered enemies to the existing government, or, because they were totally unfit for the sacred office of the ministry; whereas the ejected ministers of 1662 were loyal subjects of the king, had had a considerable share in his restoration, and were certainly among the most pious and best qualified ministers in the kingdom. There was another striking difference in the two cases: in the ejectionment by parliament, *one-fifth* of the income of all ejected ministers was appropriated to the support of their wives and children; whereas, in the case of those ministers cast out after the restoration, no provision whatever was made for the suffering families of the ejected ministers; but on the contrary, by severe penalties, they were prohibited from coming within five miles of any incorporated town; so that their opportunities of making a living by teaching, or in any other way, were exceedingly circumscribed." When prelacy had again triumphed; when, through the agency of Presbyterians, the king was restored to his throne; when all power was in the hands of Episcopalians; when Presbyterians confided in their oaths and promises of conciliation and kindness; who can palliate that act of barbarous intolerance by which two thousand ministers were thus ejected, in opposition to the petitions, prayers, and tears of their parishioners,—and then hunted down, fined, imprisoned, and made to suffer a thousand deaths?

"The questions between the revengeful Episcopate that followed the second Charles, and those who afterwards were driven to non-conformity, were," to continue the words of the Review, "not whether that should be the religion of the state—not whether the Episcopacy should retain its government and revenues—not whether the liturgy should be preserved; but whether the 'Apocrypha' should receive sanction the same as inspiration—whether a few exceptionable passages in the ritual should be modified. These, and just such unimportant differences as these, were under agitation. Let us hear Mr. Lathbury,\* in his recent defence of the prelacy. 'The alliance,' he says, 'between church and state, the lawfulness of a prescribed form, and other points, on which modern Dissenters entertain such strong opinions, were never questioned by the Presbyterians, either prior to or at the Conference; nay, the necessity of an established church was insisted on as strongly by the one party as the other.' The intolerance of an ungrateful Episco-

\*P. 55, Edinburgh Rev., Oct., 1836.



pate—one unhumbled by her afflictions—was therefore for the single purpose of revenge. No matters of principle entered into the discussion.”†

## SECTION VI.

PRESBYTERIANISM VINDICATED FROM CHARGE OF HAVING GIVEN ORIGIN TO INNUMERABLE SECTS, AND THE SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

So much, then, for the charge of intolerance. But it is also alleged by Prelatists that the system of Presbytery, as introduced by this Assembly, has resulted only in the introduction of innumerable sects, and that its tendency is to degenerate into Socinianism and every error. Never, however, was there a mistake more glaring, or a calumny more monstrous. It would be easy to show, did time permit, that Presbyterianism was never generally established in England; that the ordinance of parliament took effect only in a very few counties; that the system, as recognized by parliament, was shorn of its strength and deprived of all power of discipline and independent jurisdiction; and that even as it was established in some places, it had but little time and opportunity to exemplify its tendencies.\* It was strangled almost in its birth, by the young Hercules of Independency, and, after lingering out a dying existence, was finally crushed by the strong hand of prelatic power. It is, we have seen, a fact easily explained by these circumstances, that the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly was not subscribed by any member of that body except the prolocutor, assessors, and clerks, nor was an assent to it required from any minister or layman, as a term of ecclesiastical communion, for forty years afterwards.‡ Presbytery had no authority to carry out its principles. Its courts of review were nullified, its laws emasculated, and its standards converted into mere paper proclamations. To impute, therefore, the results which followed at this time in England to the system of Presbytery, is most preposterous and absurd. Presbytery found the seeds of these pestiferous evils growing up into maturity around it. They were the offspring of the previous ignorance and superstitions of the people, which embraced the first opportunity afforded by the license of the times, to shoot forth into vigorous growth. These sects were everywhere and always denounced and opposed by Presbytery. They, in turn, regarded Presbytery as their most powerful enemy, and hence were they all found combined in fell hostility to its system of doctrine, discipline, and

†See also Appendix.

\*See Neal, Vol. IV., 204. Price's Hist., II., 340, 408. Owen's Works, 20, 322. Orme's Life of Baxter, p. 71, 72, 80, 81. Baxter's Disput. on Ch. Gov't., Pref. p. 28 and p. 328. Henderson's Review and Consid., p. 33.

‡Neal III., 329, Note by the Editor, and references there given.

order. So that instead of fostering these sectaries, the truth is, that Presbytery actually fell a victim to their relentless hate. No—would we trace these evils to their source, we must go back to the lordliness, profaneness and superstition, to the ceremonies, doctrine and worship, of the prelates.\*

But we may meet this calumny by an appeal to facts. In France and Geneva a Presbytery was established, and there, so long as it was allowed to call forth into exercise its internal energies, there were neither sects nor schisms. These churches have since been corrupted only by the Erastian interference of the state, and the destruction of all ecclesiastical discipline. In Scotland Presbytery was established, and there dissenters are not as one to a hundred, compared with England.† In Ireland Presbytery was planted in the province of Ulster, and has it not acted as a purifying element in that land of spiritual corruption and death? In New England, so long as a system closely resembling the Presbyterian was strictly enforced, error, heresy, and immorality, were comparatively unknown. In Virginia Presbytery was planted, and did it not restore truth and piety to the church; impart vigor and energy to the state; uproot the system of state religion, and introduce that entire severance between religion and the civil power, which is now the glorious peculiarity of this land of freedom?

\*See Prynne's Eng. Prel. II., 505.

†"A few facts," says Mr. Lorimer, in his *Manual of Presbytery*, p. 192, 193, "may be noticed in this connection, not usually adverted to, but fitted to correct misapprehensions, and honor Presbytery. According to the late census, the population of Presbyterian Scotland is about *one-sixth* of that of Episcopalian England and Wales. Hence, if the countries were the same in point of religious divisions on church-government, Scotland should have a sixth of the parties which divide England. The result is widely different; much more creditable to the religious unity of Scotland, and the strength of Presbytery over a nation. The Congregationalists of England and Wales are estimated to have 1600 congregations. If the same division of opinion on church-government prevailed in Scotland, proportionally, there should be nearly 270 Independent congregations. There are only 105, and 21 of these are reported as vacant.

The Baptists of England and Wales are rated at 1520. If the same proportion held in Scotland, there should be much the same number—270 congregations; instead of which, there are 58.

The Wesleyan Methodists have, in England and Wales, above 1100 preachers, and about 330,000 members. In the same proportion, in Scotland, there should have been about 200 preachers, and 55,000 members; instead of which, there are only 30 preachers, and 3700 members.

The Roman Catholics have 561 priests in England and Wales, and 18 convents. Were Scotland equally divided, or did it equally favor the same soul-destroying system, it should have had 93 priests, and three convents. It has 80 of the one, and one of the other; and that, though old Popery has had some parts of the Highlands and islands as its ancient seat, undisturbed by the Reformation, and though near neighborhood to Popish Ireland has, in later days, given it superior facilities, which have not been unimproved, for invading the Scottish shores.

I have not been able precisely to ascertain the numbers of the Socinian body in England and Wales. Probably they may count 300 congregations. According to this proportion, Scotland should have 50; but so sound has Presbytery kept the country, that she has not five."

In fine, to apply to the Presbyterian party generally, what Milton says of the Long Parliament: "Having by a solemn protestation vowed themselves and the kingdom anew to God and his service, meeting next, as I may so resemble, with the second life of tyranny (for she was grown an ambiguous monster, and to be slain in two shapes) guarded with superstition, which hath no small power to captivate the minds of men otherwise most wise, they neither were taken with her mitred hypocrisy, nor terrified with the push of her bestial horns, but breaking them immediately, forced her to unbend the pontifical brow and recoil; which repulse only given to the prelates (that we may imagine how happy their removal would be) was the producement of such glorious effects and consequences in the church, that if I should compare them with those exploits of highest fame in poems and panegyrics of old, I am certain it would but diminish and impair their work, who are now my argument: for these ancient worthies delivered men from such tyrants as were content to enforce only an outward obedience, letting the mind be as free as it could; but these have freed us from a doctrine of tyranny, that offered violence and corruption even to the inward persuasion. They set at liberty nations and cities of men, good and bad mixed together; but these, opening the dungeons and prisons, called out of darkness and bonds the elect martyrs and witnesses of their Redeemer. They restored the body to ease and wealth; but these, the oppressed conscience to that freedom which is the chief prerogative of the gospel; taking off those cruel burdens imposed not by necessity, as other tyrants are wont, or the safeguard of their lives, but laid upon our necks by the strange wilfulness and wantonness of a needless and jolly persecutor, called Indifference. Lastly, some of these ancient deliverers have had immortal praise for preserving some of their citizens from a famine of corn. But these, by this only repulse of an unholy hierarchy, almost in a moment replenished with saving knowledge their country, nigh famished for want of that which should feed their souls. All this being done while two armies in the field stood gazing on: the one in reverence of such nobleness, quietly gave back and dislodged; the other, in spite of the unruliness and doubted fidelity in some regiments, was either persuaded or compelled to disband and retire home."

But we must here pause. Enough has been said to constitute a sufficient claim to our gratitude, and a justification of the wisdom of this commemoration. Romanists receive their missal almost as inspiration, and yet it is an inharmonious patchwork, compiled from materials drawn from every period of the church, like some old cathedral made up of buildings of

\*See McCrie's *Unity*, p. 160, 161, 165—McCrie's *Scott. Hist.*, p. 108, 106.

every order, variety, and age. Episcopalians are never weary of praising their liturgy, which is nevertheless all borrowed, and filled with endless repetitions. And both Romanists and Prelatists laud to the skies their articles and creeds, which admit the most contrary and latitudinarian interpretations,\* and shall not Presbyterians honor and commemorate those men who have given to us *original* standards, drawn, not from the muddy streams of human authority, but from the pure and uncorrupted fountain of everlasting truth?

Americans annually celebrate the Declaration of Independence, and preserve the memory of its glorious signers? And shall not Presbyterians commemorate the fame of those men to whom that declaration and the spirit that gave it birth can be assuredly traced?

The Israelites observed an annual festival in grateful commemoration of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and on different occasions contributed most liberally to the advancement of their ecclesiastical interests;—and shall we be found less zealous in the remembrance of our deliverance from the bondage of Romish and Prelatical tyranny, or less willing to communicate of our substance to carry on, to diffuse, and to establish those civil and religious blessings which have been achieved for us by blood?

This centennial celebration of the Westminster Assembly is most timely and auspicious. In the standards of that body there is a common and substantial basis, upon which all orthodox, non-episcopal communions can harmoniously unite. It is astonishing to find how very nearly the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in that body were agreed. In all that was essential they were as one. And wherever the doctrines of these standards are fully and cordially embraced, is there not still the same essential unity? There is, among all such, by whatever name they are called, and however in subordinate matters they may differ, “there is one body, and one spirit. even as we are called, in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.” Are we not all brethren, and members together of the household of faith? We are. By all the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ, as laid down in the word of God; by all the principles which constitute the glorious gospel of the blessed God; by all the tests of piety and the evidences of Christian character; by all those hopes and aims and labors to which the Christian is called of God—we are one. This epoch is our common anniversary. We are alike interested in its glorious recollections and in its

\*Witness the Oxford Tractarians, the Newmanites, and the Evangelical parties in England, and the respective interpretations of the Rev. Mr. Carey and Drs. Smith and Anthon in our own country.



forthcoming destinies. We feel on this occasion that, notwithstanding our differences in ecclesiastical arrangements, and baptismal forms, we are one. Like the members of a large family we have been scattered, and lived apart, and gathered around us new and separate interests. But we are on this occasion brought together. We revisit our old ancestral homestead. We read over the original deeds by which we became heirs to the same rich inheritance. The ties of blood draw our hearts together, and we embrace one another in the arms of spiritual affection.

This, brethren, is to me the happiest issue to which this commemoration leads. It will serve to promote other valuable ends. It will contribute to the establishment of the minds of our youth in the principles of our ecclesiastical polity, and thus prevent apostasy. It will tend to the greater elevation and usefulness of our Assembly's Board of Publication, by creating a demand for works of denominational instruction. But its adaptation to promote unity among the different branches of the church who hold the truth, is most auspicious. It has already given birth to overtures of union and friendly co-operation, on the common basis of Protestant evangelical truth, among all the orthodox, non-episcopal churches of Great Britain; and it will, we trust, eventuate in a solemn league and covenant among all such, for the defence of our common rights against our common enemies. Triumphant in our alienations, these enemies have come up in all their might against us. They are at our gates. We hear their loud bravado shouts of anticipated victory. But, thank God, our hearts are not daunted. God has given to us the spirit of courage and of confident hope. He has enkindled within us the feelings of Christian brotherhood and love. Against Popery, Prelacy in its high-church phrase, and heresy, we are one. And endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we shall henceforth be found contending earnestly for our common principles, and for that faith which was once delivered to the saints, until God shall give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. May God grant it, and to his name shall be all the praise.

## APPENDIX.

### THE OBJECTION FOUNDED UPON THE PERSECUTING PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT OF PRESBYTERIANISMS, ANSWERED.

From the Author's Work on Ecclesiastical Republicanism.

But an overwhelming argument is brought to bear against all these claims to superior liberality, on the ground that the Presbyterian church has, in past days, cherished exclusive and persecuting principles, and manifested this spirit in her conduct; and that some Presbyterian bodies are still found willing to sanction these principles.\* Now to the truth of both these facts, we grant our reluctant and most sorrowful confession. And while much might be said to palliate the guilt of such intolerance, and to show that in comparison with the course pursued by the Papacy and the Prelacy, it was fitful, temporary, and partial, while *their* intolerance has been constant, universal, and applied to *opinions* as well as to *forms*;—yet we take refuge in no apology.\* We make no excuse. We are rather willing to join in the execration of such principles, and the condemnation of such acts, (so far as facts will show that they were cherished and carried out,) as utterly alien to the spirit of the gospel, and to the genius of Presbyterianism. And that a *portion* of the Covenanters should still maintain these views, is a fact inexplicable for its mystery, inexcusable for its absurdity, and unparalleled for its anomaly.

But what have we to do with the conduct of these brethren, with whom, although agreeing in most points, we differ in *this* matter *toto coelo*; with whom we have no ecclesiastical *connection* whatever; and for whose opinions on this subject *we* are *no more* responsible, than we are *as Christians* for the corruptions of all those who are called by *that name*. We now advocate the claims, and present the sentiments, of 'THE PRESBY-

\*Dr. How's Vind. of Prot. Ep. Ch. pp. 47, 48, 374, 375. This charge is not seldom also brought against us by Congregationalists, who stand in need of a common defence. But that, in former days, they made their views of the constitution of a church an article of faith, appertaining to salvation, may be seen by numerous quotations in Paget's Def. of Presb. Ch. Gov. p. 33. As to the lengths to which they then proceeded, see Bastwick's Utter Routing, &c. Epistle to the Reader. See also the history of their proceedings in New England, as given in Clark's Hist. of Intolerance, vol. i. Pref., and in all other histories. Dr. Lang's Relig. and Educ. in America, p. 125. &c., where he shows that "Cromwell's own clergy," accepted sequestered benefices of the Church of England. See further, on this subject, from Mr. Lorimer, on p. 232.

This forms the whole strength of Bishop Hughes's argument in proof of the opposition of Presbyterianism to civil and religious liberty. See discussion.

\*See Dr. Binney's Dissent not Schism, p. 74, though an Independent.

TERIAN CHURCH' of these United States. For on this subject, alterations were found necessary, in order to adapt our standards to the views of our American Zion. We challenge therefore a fair and impartial verdict, and are willing to compare ourselves with any other denomination whatsoever. We do not, for a moment, shrink even from a comparison of Presbyterianism, *in general*, with Prelacy, *in general*; but in this case we would require, that the *whole* history of Prelacy, as developed in the Romish, Anglican, and other churches, should be considered; and then the *whole* history of Presbytery, as developed in the Waldenses, Paulicians, Culdees, and Scotch, Irish, and American churches, should be brought into contrast. In such a comparison, who can doubt the transcendent lustre with which Presbytery would outshine Prelacy. Its most intolerant enactments would appear liberality itself, and its most persecuting doings the forthgoings of Christian charity, when brought into contrast with the bloody annals of councils, canons, decrees, crusades, test acts, acts of uniformity, Bartholomew scenes and massacres, which constitute such an integral portion of Prelatical ecclesiastical history.\* Our present con-

\*Dr. McCrie's *Miscell. Wks. Rev. of the Life of Owen*. See also Presbyterians vindicated from all serious persecution, in Lorimer's *Manual of Presbytery*, p. 230. The writer says, "The Congregationalists, then, have nothing in point of *practice* of which to boast, over their Presbyterian brethren; and in regard to their earlier holding sound *theoretical* views of toleration and religious liberty, the same great historical authority shows, that as correct sentiments were entertained from a much earlier date, by the Reformers and first Puritans, who were Presbyterian; that soon after the Reformation the same views were common among the Presbyterians of Holland and France; that it was not the principles of the sectaries, but of the reformers and their successors, which lay, and still lie, at the foundation of British freedom, civil and religious; that the writings of leading Independents, at the period referred to, betray decided symptoms of intolerance and persecution; and that it was the extravagant and most injurious proceedings of many of the sectaries, which, by driving matters to extremities in England, created a reaction—lost all the immense advantages of a sound, civil, and ecclesiastical reformation, destroyed the monarch, and recalled persecution, with its horrors, under Charles II."

"Had this little work not already exceeded the limits which were originally intended, it would not be difficult to vindicate the Presbyterians from any serious charge of persecution, in connection with the signing of the 'Solemn League and Covenant,' and kindred subjects. It could be shown, from the testimony of such men as Henderson, Dickson, Cant, and Lord Loudon, that men were not forced to take the covenant, or punished for refusal; that any cases of this kind were rare and unauthorized; that the league was most cordially embraced, without any compulsion from church or state, by the great body of the nation; and that any *undue* influence was chiefly employed *against* the covenant. It could be shown, also, from the exhortations of the Westminster Assembly, and the speeches of such members as Coleman, Caryl, Palmer, Thorowgood, &c., that they disapproved of the propagation of religion by force, and that it was mainly the seditious-political, and not the erroneous-religious, against which their exertions were directed, and which gave to their sentiments and proceedings the air of persecution. The case is correctly stated by 'the Reformed Presbytery,' in their Explanation and Defence of Terms of Communion in 1801. 'If any otherwise peaceable and inoffensive subjects, in church and state, had religious scruples in their own mind, both the open doctrine and uniform

cern, however, is with the Presbyterian church, as known in the standards of our American General Assemblies, both old and new school, as compared with the Prelatical communion, either Romish or Protestant. The only proper parallel in this case, therefore, is the constitution and principles of our own particular church, in comparison with theirs, and not of all who may bear our name.

Now, from the extracts already presented, it must be manifest that there can be no greater liberality, nor any protest against both the spirit, principles, and practice of intoderance, more powerful than that delivered, in the standards of our church. In addition to what has been adduced from them, let the following be considered. Chapter xx. of our Confession of Faith, is on 'Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience.' In this it is taught,\* 'God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.'

Again, in chapter xxiii. 'Of the civil magistrate,' it is declared, 'civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or in the least interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing-fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. And as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner, as that no

practice of our pious ancestors recommended all possible tenderness in laboring to have them removed. But, on the other hand, when cruel popish factions, under the fair pretence of only claiming a liberty to serve God in their own way, were plotting the utter ruin of both church and state, and seeking the overthrow of all laws, human and divine; in such a case, indeed, they could not help thinking, that salutary restraint, and well regulated coercion, were indispensably necessary. And what nation under heaven, properly consulting her own safety and happiness, in time of danger, would not find it advisable to act on the same great principle?"

\*Sec. 2, p. 109.



person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury, to any other person whatsoever; and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.'

'It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity or indifference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him; from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all, to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.'

So also in Form of Government, chapter i. section 1, as quoted above,\* and in chapter viii. section 2, where, speaking of all our ecclesiastical courts, it teaches, 'These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.'

To this let me add the following extracts from 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church,' by the author, which has been approved by various portions of our church, and by some of its leading divines.† In chapter v. section 1, 'Of the nature of church power,' it is asked, 'Is the power which church officers possess, such as to affect the civil interests of men?'

'No; it is altogether ecclesiastical; and such as to affect men only in their relation to the church, and to God.'

'How else may you describe this power of the church? It is spiritual, and addressed to the consciences of those who are subject to it.'

'Have church officers any power or authority, even in ecclesiastical matters, independently, or in themselves considered? None whatever—they act altogether ministerially.'

'Do Presbyterians, in our country, ascribe any power to the church, which interferes with the authorities of the state? No; Presbyterians maintain, that the church is independent of the state, and distinct from it, in its laws, its administrations, and its objects; and that it is governed by its own laws, which are purely spiritual.'

'Do Presbyterians in our country, desire then, any alliance between their church and the state? On the contrary, they

\*Eccles. Rep. p. 218.

†A third edition has been called for

believe, that any such alliance ever has been, and ever will be, equally injurious to the state and to the church; and that it is to be deprecated by every Christian, as the baneful source of corruption and intolerance.\*

Let any man candidly study these passages, in connection with the constitution of this freest and most liberal of all governments, and will he not say that they are, in spirit, perfectly the same, and that, in the principles delivered in these standards, our puritan fathers found the germs, the elements, of that perfect civil and religious liberty, which every citizen of this great republic equally enjoys. Real liberality cannot possibly coexist with any system which does not recognize the principle, that individual conviction is the only worthy basis of true faith, and the consequent right and duty of private judgment. In this doctrine, the very essence of real liberality, both political and religious, is involved. It is when this principle is received as *an axiomatic truth*, that the exercise of such liberality is not (as it is too often represented) of the nature of a *lenient indulgence*, or a *benevolent concession*, but stands forth, not on the ground of concession, but of principle,—not of indulgence, but of right,—not of favor, but of justice,—not of compromise, but of steadfast maintenance of the truth,—each upholding what he believes right, without denouncing the other

\*The only portions of our standards, besides the doctrines of election and predestination, which Bishop Hughes could pervert to a sense opposite to civil and religious liberty, is the explanation given of the Second Commandment (Breckinridge and Hughes's discussion, pp. 318, 344, 372), which, among other things, is said to require '*the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.*' 'If I understand the reasoning,' says Dr. Breckinridge, 'he means to charge us with holding, that *force* of some kind is a duty; or that some *method* of '*removing the monuments of idolatry,*' at war with the rights of others, is expressed. For I suppose he will not say, that if we *oppose false worship*, and remove these *monuments of idolatry*, in a constitutional way, and *without* disturbing the rights of others, this would be *wrong*, or *against* liberty, civil or religious.' 'He will not say that it is persecution, to oppose idolatry by discussion, moral influence, and prayer. The question then is, as to the *manner of doing it*. Does our doctrine utter or imply tyranny, or force, or a hindrance to the free exercise of religious worship? If so, we should like to know it. So far is this from being the fact, that he has himself owned '*that the Confession of Faith was amended* (at the adoption of the American Constitution), *to suit the constitution and the new order of things.*' What he thus admits (as '*an amendment*') to be true, may be easily shown, by reference to all those parts of our standards, which relate to the freedom of worship, and the use of force, by the civil magistrate, in matters of conscience.

"Yet it is not said of *our* particular church, but of all Christian denominations, that the civil magistrate should protect them. Religion is one of our *common* rights—and a *civil right* to be protected in it. But Mr. Hughes replies, this '*excludes us idolaters.*' No. We say '*all religious* and ecclesiastical assemblies,' are to be '*protected,*' though it be an antichristian system. But shall we, for this reason, be *silent* about their errors? May we not use the liberty of speech?"

as wrong; all uniting for objects in which they agree, without compromising one point in which they differ.\*

Now, as interpreted in our standards, Christianity sanctions and does not destroy this freedom; elevates and does not dethrone reason; encourages and does not fetter inquiry; secures and does not withhold liberty of conscience; since it enforces only a *voluntary* subjection to its requirements. It is the doctrine of Bossuet, and the church to which he belongs, and not the doctrine of the Presbyterian church, that 'all attachment to private judgment is heresy, it being the property of a heretic to have a particular opinion.'‡ And as this doctrine has been shown to lie at the very foundation of American republicanism†, in connection with the entire severance of politics and religion, of civil and religious matters, the absurdity of the charge of any connivance at intolerance, as made against our church, is as great as if alleged against the Constitution of the United States itself.

\*Prof. Powell, of Oxford, on State Educ. London, 1840, pp. 81, 82.

‡Variations of Prot. vol. i. p. 17.

†Tocqueville's Democ. in Am.







AN  
ECCLESIASTICAL CATECHISM

OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FOR THE USE OF  
FAMILIES, BIBLE-CLASSES, AND PRIVATE MEMBERS.

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By THOMAS SMYTH,

Author of Lectures on the Apostolical Succession, Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, Ecclesiastical Republicanism, Etc.

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1843.

SHOW THEM THE FORM OF THE HOUSE AND THE FASHION THEREOF, AND THE GOINGS OUT THEREOF, AND THE COMINGS IN THEREOF, AND ALL THE FORMS THEREOF, AND ALL THE ORDINANCES THEREOF, AND ALL THE LAWS THEREOF: AND WRITE IT IN THEIR SIGHT, THAT THEY MAY KEEP THE WHOLE FORM THEREOF, AND ALL THE ORDINANCES THEREOF, AND DO THEM. EZEKIEL 43: 11.

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### ECCLESIASTICAL CATECHISM.

"An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of Families, Bible Classes, and private Members, by THOMAS SMYTH, D. D., Pastor of the second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C."

This is a neatly executed work of 113 pages. As an evidence of its popularity, it may be mentioned it has passed the fourth edition, and has been re-published in Ireland. We regard this Catechism, as an important accession to works on ecclesiastical polity, believing it to be well adapted to popular use; and as it presents a comprehensive but condensed view of the subject, it will be more valuable to common readers, as it will in some degree supersede the necessity of their reading more voluminous and costly books. The following are the subjects of the chapters. I. The Church.—II. The Government of the Church.—III. Officers of the Church.—IV. Courts of the Church.—V. Power of the Church.—VI. Fellowship of the Church.—VII. Relation of the Presbyterian Church to other denominations and to the world. Each of these chapters contain sub-divisions or sections, and most of the answers are supported by appropriate Scripture references, which makes this little volume the more valuable. We would therefore recommend this work to all our readers, especially the youth of our congregations, whom circumstances at the present time require to be indoctrinated in ecclesiastical government and discipline.—*The Christian Magazine of the South.*

## PREFACE.

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The necessity for some such work as the present has been long felt by many. Great detriment has accrued to the presbyterian church, from the want of that indoctrination in the principles of her worship and polity, which it is surely her duty to provide for all, who commit themselves and their offspring to her teaching and guidance. Her members and children have been attached to her, not so much by those ties of principle and conviction, which prove firm and enduring, as by merely local and personal considerations, which form, in times of difficulty, but a feeble bond of attachment. Other churches are diligent in their efforts to imbue the young mind with the knowledge of all their doctrinal peculiarities; and if this is done in a spirit of charity and christian brotherhood, will it not promote, rather than prevent, that perfect *christian* union for which we hope?

That this work, which was drawn up at the suggestion of some leading members of our church, is altogether what is needed, the author can hardly dare to hope. He would still offer it as an *attempt*, and not as a full *accomplishment*, of all that he believes to be demanded by the necessities of the church. He has used every effort to procure hints from competent individuals, and would return his thanks to those brethren and gentlemen, who have favored him with their views. Of these he has availed himself, in rendering the work more correct; while, by the sub-division of the chapters, the various topics will, he trusts, be better understood, and more easily comprehended by the learner. To the Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., the author would especially render thanks, for his kindness in first imposing upon him the preparation of this volume; for his careful revision of it; and for his valuable suggestions.

He has endeavored to render it as full and comprehensive as possible; and, for this purpose, he has availed himself freely of the labors of others. He would particularly refer to the Ecclesiastical Catechisms of Dr. McLeod, of the Rev. Samuel Palmer, of one published in Ireland, and of A Sequel to the Shorter Catechism, as sources from which he has derived assistance.

It was thought better to err on the side of prolixity, than of brevity; as it was one object of the author to fit the work for private reading, and to make it as satisfactory as possible, on all the leading subjects embraced in its design. The teacher can



use his discretion in prescribing to his pupils, whether in the family, the Bible-class, or the Sabbath school, such portions of it as he may deem most necessary to be committed to memory. Other portions he may think it sufficient to read with them, accompanied with his own further explanations; and whenever he may think any answer of too great length to be retained in the memory, he may, after such reading and examination, require it to be given in substance, in the language of the pupil.

Although the author has heard of but one opinion as to the usefulness of the work, yet, when he found that the second edition was entirely exhausted, he carefully revised the whole, altered and remodelled several portions, and added some sections, (as on the apostolic succession, and the relation of the presbyterian church to the world,) which will, it is hoped, increase the usefulness of the work.

In the fervent hope that it may lead some of the rising generation to ask for the old paths, that they may walk therein, it is committed to the blessing of the Head of the church, by his most unworthy servant.

THE AUTHOR.

*Charleston, S. C., 1843.*

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# ECCLESIASTICAL CATECHISM.

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## CHAPTER I. OF THE CHURCH.

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### SECTION I.

*The different meanings of the word church, as used in scripture.\**

1. *What is the meaning of the term church, as used in scripture?*

The word church, as used in scripture, has various significations, being used both in a common and a sacred sense.

2. *What is the meaning of the word church, as used in scripture in a common sense?*

The word, which is translated church, is used in scripture in a common sense, to signify any public assembly of persons to consult together.

Acts 19: 32, 39, 41. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefor they were called together. And when he had thus spoken he dismissed the assembly.

3. *What is the sacred sense, in which the word church is most generally used in scripture?*

This word is, in its sacred sense, applied to the church of Christ, which is a society of men called of God, by the gospel, unto the faith and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of God in him†

4. *What is the first meaning of the word church in this sacred sense?*

It means any particular congregation or society of professing christians.

Col. 4: 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. Rom. 16: 5. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

5. *What is the second meaning of the word church in this sacred sense?*

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\*See valuable work on the Bib. Repertory, April, 1845, p. 218 and 226, and also for July, 1845. Act. on Gen. Assembly on Romish Baptism. Stillingfleet's Protestant Religion, p. 46 and p. 50.

†*Ecclesia* was used by the writers of the Septuagint version, which was familiar to the New Testament writers, for the word *congregation*, as it stands in our version of the Old Testament. It is on this account that in the New Testament instead of the word *congregation*, we have *church*, which is the same as *kirk* or assembly.



It is applied to several congregations, or churches, considered as one body, under the same general superintendence.

1 Cor. 1: 2. Unto the *church* of God which is at Corinth; 1 Cor. 14: 34. Let your women keep silence in the *churches*; Acts 8: 1. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 21: 20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

6. *What is the third meaning of the word church in its sacred sense?*

It means any assembly of the rulers of the church, when convened as an ecclesiastical judicatory.\*

Matt. 18: 15-17. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. See also Acts 14: 27. Acts 15: 2, 30, 22. Acts 11: 26. Also 1 Cor. ch. 5.†

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#### SECTION II.

*The distinction between the church, as visible and invisible.‡*

7. *What is the fourth meaning of the word church in its sacred sense?*

It means the whole body of God's redeemed people, that have been, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head, and which is generally called the invisible church.

Eph. 5: 25-27. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Col. 1: 18. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. See also Eph. 1: 10, 22, 23, and Heb. 12: 23.

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\*That the word church means an assembly of rulers meeting together in an ecclesiastical judicatory, see largely proved in Dr. Ayton's Orig. Constit. of the Church, ch. ii. § 3, pp. 63, 64. Brown's Dict. of the Bible, Art. Church. Livingstone's Theol. p. 261.

‡That this meaning is to be attached to the term church in these places, and that it is in itself an important meaning, was maintained by the early writers in defence of presbyterianism. I may refer particularly to Rutherford's Due Right of Presbyteries, &c. 4to. London, 1644, at pp. 309, 314, 322, 489-491. See also pp. 316, 348. See also his plea for Paul's Presbyteries, 4to. London, 1642, p. 85, &c. Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming, 4to. London, 1646, pp. 394-297, and 350-467. See further, Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici, by the London Ministers, 4to. London, 1654, p. 208, &c. See also many authorities produced in Paget's Def. of Presb. Ch. Govt. London, 1641, pp. 50, 51.

†See Bib. Repertory, April, 1845, p. 223.

8. *Why is the church called invisible?*

Because its union with Christ is a spiritual union; because the faith and love of those who are its true members are invisible to men, and infallibly discerned only by God, who looketh upon the heart; and because, in this sense, the church has no visible or formal existence on earth, but is an object of faith, being composed of all Christ's faithful members, wherever they are found.

9. *What is the fifth meaning of the word church in its sacred sense?*

It means the whole body of those, throughout the world, of every denomination, with their children, who profess the true religion, and which is commonly called the visible church.

Acts 2: 39, 47. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13, 28. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1 Cor. 15: 9. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God, &c. Acts 8. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. 1 Cor. 10: 32. Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

10. *Why is the church, in this sense, called the visible church?*

Because all are members of it who make a profession of the christian religion, including those who, while they are members of the church on earth, may not be members of the church invisible, nor possessed of either faith or love.

11. *May there, then, be distinct branches or sections of the visible church?*

Yes; there may be distinct branches or sections of the visible church existing in different kingdoms, as the church of Scotland, the church of Geneva, the church of England, &c. These all, so far as they hold the same faith, are component parts of the one universal visible church; in the same manner as the waters of the different seas, however variously distributed and called, are nevertheless connected among themselves, and form component parts of one and the same great ocean.

12. *Does this distinction of the church into visible and invisible make two churches instead of one?*

It does not; since by these terms we only distinguish the church in its external form, from the same church in its internal or spiritual character. As visible, it includes hypocrites;

as invisible, only believers. As visible, it requires from its members only an external and credible profession of the faith; as invisible, it supposes in every member a sincere and hearty reception of the truth, in the love of it.\*

13. *To which of these churches are left the promises of perpetuity and indefectibility?*

Not to the visible church, which may fail and err in any of its parts, but to the invisible, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and with which Christ will be, even to the end of the world. So that there shall always be those, somewhere, who shall believe and profess the true religion.

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SECTION III.

*The present use of the word church in these several senses.*

14. *Is the word church still commonly used in these various senses?*

Yes, in all of them except the common sense, in which it is not used, because it is now exclusively applied to religious bodies, and in its sacred sense.

15. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the first meaning?*

We speak of the several churches in any town or city, and also, when there are more than one of the same denomination, as, for instance, the presbyterian, we speak of the first, second, or third presbyterian church.

16. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the second meaning?*

We speak of the presbyterian church in the United States of America, and so of other churches.

17. *Can you give me an illustration of the use of the word church in the third meaning?*

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\*See this meaning of the word fully developed in Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book 3, sec. 1, in Works, vol. i. p. 195, Hanbury's edition, London, 1830, 3 vols. 8vo. See also p. 255. See also bishop Hopkins's Works, vol. ii. p. 418. This subject may also be seen fully discussed in Rogers's Discourse and Review of the Visible and Invisible Church of Christ. London, 1721. Dr. George Miller, in his recent letter to Dr. Pusey, London, 1840, at p. 22, speaks of 'the fundamental error of rejecting the distinction between the visible and the invisible church of Christ.' See also pp. 23-25, where he calls this distinction 'the essential principle of the Reformation, and very plainly discoverable in the articles (that is, the xxxix. Art.) of our church.' See also Essays on the Church, Introductory, p. 5, &c. Nolan's Catholic Char. of Christ, p. 73. The Church in the World, pp. 54, 79. Neander's Plant of the Christ'n Ch. vol. ii. pp. 177, 178, 248. Dr. Owen's Works, vol. xix. pp. 152, 167, 209, 215, and authorities on pp. 156, 169. See also the martyr Philpot's testimony in Lond. Chr. Obs. 1841, p. 339, and Churchman's Monthly Rev. Dec. 1841, p. 661, where are quoted archbishops Secker and Hooker.

When the session of a church is assembled together, we say there is a meeting of the church; and when any member has been disciplined or received by that body, we say he has been disciplined or received by that church of which it is the session.

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SECTION IV.

*Of the church catholic.*

18. *What other term is applied to the church of Christ, considered as a whole, besides the terms visible and invisible?*

The term catholic.

19. *What is the meaning of the word catholic?*

The word catholic means universal.

20. *Why is the church of Christ called catholic, or universal?*

Because it is not confined to one nation, as it was under the Jewish economy, but consists of all those in every part of the world who believe in Christ; because its privileges are conferred equally upon all classes of men; and because it will yet embrace within it all nations and kindreds of the earth.

1 Cor. 12: 12, 13. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Psa. 2: 8. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. See also Rom. 15: 9-12.

21. *What other sense was attached by the early fathers to the word catholic?*

It was used by them as synonymous with the term orthodox, so that, in this view of it, the true church is to be known by that true doctrine, which is every where to be preached, and to be held fast.

22. *Has this catholic visible church been perpetuated and preserved?*

Yes; there has always been a visible church catholic, which, though divided by place, forms, and names, may yet be considered as one body, holding the head, and professing in substance the true religion.

23. *In what sense, then, may the visible church be properly said to be catholic, or universal?*

The visible church may be properly said to be catholic, or universal, not as consisting of one society, under one government, but, as its various societies and churches are, or ought to be, modelled on the same principles; enjoying common privileges, and having one divine head, even Christ, who rules and guides it by his word and spirit.



## SECTION V.

*Of the unity of the church.*

24. *What do you mean by the unity of the church?*

By the unity of the church, I understand that as there is but one God and Saviour, so all who believe and obey the gospel are equally adopted into the family of heaven; equally enjoy all the promised blessings of salvation; are equally entitled to the free use of all the means of grace; are baptized into one faith; and are called, justified, and sanctified through the same plan of redeeming love and mercy.

25. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church, that it should be under one earthly head?*

No; there is no other head of the church than the Lord Jesus Christ, whose house and family it is.

Eph. 1: 23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

26. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church universal, that it should be under the same forms and regulations?*

No; it is only necessary that whatever forms and regulations are adopted by any church, they should be authorized by the word of God, and not contrary to it.

Rom. 14: 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 1 Cor. 14: 14, 40. Let all things be done decently and in order. See also Gal. 5: 1.

27. *Is it not further necessary to the unity of the church, that it should, in all things, be governed by one and the same ecclesiastical authority?*

Certainly not! for we read in scripture of the church at Antioch, the church at Jerusalem, the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, the churches of Syria, the churches of Asia;—and in primitive times, there was the Eastern church, the Western, the African, the British, and so on, and these were all separate and distinct.

28. *In what, then, does the unity of the church essentially consist?*

The unity of the church essentially consists in unity of faith, by which all its members hold the same divine truths; and in unity of spirit, or that oneness which subsists between Christ, its Head, and all its members, whereby the same Spirit dwells in all, and works in all the same christian graces.

Eph. 4: 3, 13. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. See also 2 Cor. 11: 4. Jude 3. Gal. 1: 8, 9. 1 Pet. 5: 9. Col. 1: 2, 7, 23.

## SECTION VI.

*Of pure, imperfect, corrupt, and false churches.*

29. *Are we, then, to understand that all particular churches are equally churches of Christ?*

All particular churches which agree in holding the truth as it is in Jesus; which profess sound doctrine; which maintain the preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments; and which thus hold the truth in love, are justly distinguished by the name and authority of true visible churches. Nevertheless, all true churches are not perfect, neither are all churches true churches, but some are corrupt and some false.

30. *Is it not, then, necessary to distinguish between the nature and essence of a church, and the integrity and perfection of a church? and what is that distinction?*

The nature and essence of a church, consists in the preaching of the pure word of God, and the due administration of sacraments, so that where these are, there is a visible church. The integrity or perfection of a church, consists, further, in that apostolic form, order, and ministry, which can be traced to the institution of Christ and his apostles.

31. *What, then, do you mean by a pure church?\**

By a pure church, or portion of the visible church, I mean a society whose confession of faith agrees with the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles; and which is governed solely by the laws laid down in the word of God, or drawn from it by plain and necessary inference.

32. *What, then, are the signs of a pure church?*

The signs of a pure church are soundness of doctrine, a lawful and regular ministry, the prevalence of love among its members and towards all saints, and the due administration of gospel ordinances, including discipline.

Eph. 2: 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Acts 2: 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 14: 38. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Matt. 28: 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. See also Acts 20: 7.

33. *Is not antiquity as it regards its visible form, one mark of a pure church?*

It is not; since, judged by this standard, the Jewish would be the only true church; while other forms of religion, also, lay claims to greater antiquity than the christian. Besides, the

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\*Bib. Repertory, April, 1845, p. 231, and Stillingfleet's Protestant Religion, p. 503.

signs of all true christian churches being those laid down in the Bible, must, therefore, be as ancient as christianity itself.

34. *Is not universality, in the extent of its authority and government, the mark of a pure church?*

Universality, in the sense of universal extent, is not a mark of a pure church; for no church is, or ever has been, in this sense, universal; and the assumption of any such authority, by any one church, over all others, is antichristian usurpation.

35. *Is the possession of a clear and uninterrupted personal succession in its ministers, from the time of the apostles, the necessary mark of a pure church?*

Such a personal succession cannot be the mark of a pure church, because it cannot be shown by any church on earth; because, if it had been essential, such a succession would have been preserved free from doubt or interruption; because it is nowhere laid down in the scriptures; and because the scriptures show, that even when an unquestioned succession did exist, God withdrew his presence, and forsook the apostate church.\*

Jer. 7: 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these. Mal. 2: 1, 9. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Rom. 9: 6-8. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

36. *What do you mean by an imperfect church?*

By an imperfect church I understand a church, which continues steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, teaching the pure word of God, and omitting no essential truth of the gospel; but which, at the same time, has not the sacraments duly administered, nor its order, polity, and ministry perfectly conformed to the scriptural model.

37. *What do you mean by a corrupt church?*

By a corrupt church I understand one which, while it preserves the essential truths of the gospel, at the same time adds other things to these truths, which are not found in God's word, or are repugnant to the same; and which thus, by human traditions or any other spurious authority, makes vain the preaching of the truth, and corrupts the administration of divine ordinances.

38. *What do you mean by a false church?*

That church which has laid any other foundation than Christ and his righteousness; which has denied any of the essential

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\*See chapter vii. sect. v. for a full consideration of this subject.

doctrines of the word of God ; or interpreted the word of God according to its own vain imagination ; such a church, whatever else it may possess of order or discipline, and however it may claim the temple, the priesthood, antiquity, or succession—is a false church.

Rev. 2 : 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

39. *What, then, would you say of each of these churches?*

All churches which are imperfect, ought to be improved ; such as are corrupt, reformed ; while such as are false, ought to be subverted, and their foundations laid again.

40. *May there, then, be true christians within the bosom of false and apostate churches?*

We are certainly taught that within such churches there may be some who are true christians, and therefore members of the invisible church ; and who, with more or less publicity, bear testimony against their errors. But as they are in great danger, we are to invite all who are members of such churches, to come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

1 Kings 19 : 18. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. Isa. 1 : 9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Rom. 11 : 28. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake, &c. Isa. 10 : 20, 22. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return : the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. See also Ezek. 9 : 4. 2 Pet. 2 : 8. Psa. 119 : 53, 136. Rev. 12 : 6, 14. Acts 9 : 31. Rev. 18 : 4.

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#### SECTION VII.

*Of the perpetuity and necessity of the church.*

41. *Are we, then, to believe in the perpetuity of the church of Christ?*

Our Saviour has declared that the church is built upon a rock ; that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; and that He will be with it always, even to the end of the world.

Matt. 16 : 18. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 28 : 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. See also Isa. 59 : 21. Acts 2 : 47. Titus 2 : 14. 1 Pet. 2 : 9, 10. Isa. 61 : 8, 9. Dan. 2 : 14, 44. John 14 : 14, 16, 17. 1 Thess. 4 : 18. Matt. 13 : 41-49. Eph. 4 : 11-13.



42. *Does a full belief in the certain perpetuity of the church of Christ, imply a belief in the perpetuity of any particular visible church?*

There is nothing in the word of God to warrant a belief in the perpetuity, or continued purity, of any particular visible church. On the contrary, we are there admonished that even apostolic churches had fallen away, and would finally become extinct; and that a very general corruption of the gospel, which had then commenced, would be consummated, to the destruction of many souls.

Rev. 2: 5, 16, 24. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden. See also Rev. 3: 3, 4, 15, 16. Rev. 18: 2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 2 Thess. 2: 11, 12. 1 Tim. 4: 1, 6. 2 Tim. 3: 13. 2 Pet. 3: 1, 3. Rev. 17: 10. Acts 20: 30. 1 John 2: 19. 2 John 7. Jude 18. Rom. 11: 18, 22. Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity: but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 1 John 2: 1, 4.

43. *Is a connection with any visible church, sufficient to secure the salvation of the soul?*

On the contrary, our connection with a false church may lead to the damnation of the soul, by involving it in the guilt of its heresies and abominations. Neither is salvation to be secured in any other way than by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only propitiation for sins.

2 Thess. 2: 11, 12. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. See also Matt. 24: 5, 11, 24. 1 Tim. 4: 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. Acts 7: 42. 1 Cor. 11: 19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 2 Tim. 3: 1, 15. Rom. 2: 25, 29. Gal. 5: 6. John 3.

44. *What, then, are we to understand by the doctrine, that out of the church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation?*

By this doctrine we are to understand, that faith, and consequently salvation, are ordinarily bestowed by God through the instrumentality of his ministers, and that it is only in this way

that men are ordinarily introduced into the invisible church, out of which there is no salvation. But it does not teach, that salvation cannot be obtained out of any particular visible church, by whatever name it may be called; neither is such a claim, on the part of any church, to be otherwise regarded than as alike impious and vain.

Col. 1: 18. Eph. 5: 23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. See also Rom. 10: 14, 15. 1 Cor. 5: 12, 13. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Acts 2: 47. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Rev. 3: 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth. Rev. 1: 18. Rom. 5: 1, 2, 8. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Numb. 23: 8. How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?

45. *May we expect to find any church, on earth, perfectly free from error?*

The purest existing churches are subject both to mixture and error; and therefore we must not expect in them absolute perfection.

1 Cor. 13: 12. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. Matt. 13: 24, 47. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field. Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. See also Rev. 2 and 3.

46. *Is it, then, a matter of indifference to what church we belong?*

No; it is our solemn duty to understand the character and signs of a true church of Christ; and to adhere to that church which is found most consonant to the scriptures, in its doctrines, its ordinances, and its constitution.

Matt. 5: 19. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 1 John 4: 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Thess. 5: 21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

## SECTION VIII.

*Of the duty of different churches; and of the church militant and triumphant.*

47. *In view of this liability to err, what is the duty of each church?*

It is the duty of every denomination, or church, to reform abuses where they may exist; to endeavor after full conformity to the plan of church order appointed by Christ; to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and to exercise strict discipline over all offenders, according to the spiritual laws of Christ's kingdom.

Rev. 2: 14, 15. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

48. *What is the further duty of the members of each particular church, towards those of every other denomination?*

It is their duty to pray for them; to exercise charity towards them; to live peaceably with them; to remember, that to their own master they must give account; while rejoicing in the truth, to hold it in love; and, as far as no sanction is given to error in doctrine or practice, to co-operate with them in every good word and work.

Psa. 122: 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Rom. 14: 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. Rom. 12: 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 1 Cor. 9: 22. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Gal. 6: 10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, &c. See also 1 Cor. 13, and Jude 3.

49. *What further division of the church does this consideration of its present division lead you to mention?*

The church is further divided into the church militant and the church triumphant.

50. *What is meant by the church militant?*

By the church militant, is meant the whole body of true believers in this present evil world; who are called, and required of God, to contend with many internal and external sufferings, adversities, persecutions, heresies, and temptations.

2 Tim. 4: 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

51. *What is meant by the church triumphant?*

By the church triumphant, is meant the whole number of the elect, the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven; who are freed from all temptations and trials; admitted

to the most perfect rest and blessedness ; and gathered together into one glorious church, under Christ their head.

Eph. 1 : 10, 22, 23. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church ; which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Heb. 12 : 22-24. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirit of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See also Rev. 21 and 22.

*52. Should not the hope of this blessed state, shed abroad in all true christian minds the spirit of kindness and brotherly love?*

Yes. However differing as to their modes of thinking, and their particular opinions and forms ; and however divided into particular communions ; all real christians, who hold the head, ought to regard themselves as constituting but one church, and so to live together in unity of spirit, and in the bonds of peace ; looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of their common God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

John 13 : 34. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that we also love one another. Titus 3 : 3-5. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.



## CHAPTER II.

### GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

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#### SECTION I.

##### *Of church government in general.*

##### *53. What is meant by government?*

Government, in its general meaning, signifies direction, regulation, or control. In reference to any particular state or nation, government signifies, that system of fundamental rules and principles to which it is subject.

##### *54. Has the christian church, in its visible form, any system of government peculiar to itself?*

Yes, the christian church, being a spiritual kingdom, whose only King, Head, and Governor is the Lord Jesus Christ, has a system of laws enjoined by Him, and by which alone it is, and of right ought to be, governed; and has therefore an inherent power of self-regulation and direction.

Isa. 9: 6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Col. 1: 18. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Eph. 1: 22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Matt. 23: 8-10. But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. See also John 18: 36. Luke 12: 14. John 6: 15, and 8: 15. Rom. 14: 17. Col. 1: 13.

##### *55. In what respects is the church exclusively the kingdom of Christ?*

The church is exclusively the kingdom of Christ, because it is based upon his institution; subject to his authority; regulated by his laws; animated by his spirit; devoted to his honor; blessed by his presence; and protected by his power, as head over all things to his church.

##### *56. Where, then, is that system of laws to be found by which the church is to be governed?*

In the word of God; the only infallible rule of christian faith and practice.

Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Rev. 22: 18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are in this book. Heb. 8: 5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

57. *Why is such a form of government necessary to the church?*

Because the christian church is a society, and no society can exist without laws and order; and because the church, having no civil power, or authority, requires a spiritual authority sufficient to preserve order, censure the disobedient, expel the rebellious, and encourage and sustain the pious.

Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Isa. 33: 20, 23. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; for the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us.

58. *From whence is this authority of the church derived?*

The power of the church is derived from God the Father; bestowed through the mediator, Christ Jesus; conferred by Christ; and to be exercised by those officers to whom Christ has committed the spiritual government of his church.

59. *What is meant by the divine right of church government?*

By the divine right of church government, we are taught, that it is not the result of human prudence, but sanctioned by divine approbation, established by divine acts, and enforced by divine precepts.

60. *In what sense do Romanists and high-church prelatists hold this opinion?*

The Romanists and high-church prelatists hold, that a particular form of church government is not only appointed by God, but is so essential to the existence of the church, that there can be no true church without it.

61. *Do any presbyterians maintain this kind of divine right, with respect to their form of church government?*

No, there are no presbyterians guilty of this extravagance.

62. *In what sense do presbyterians hold the divine right of their system of government?*

They maintain, that a particular form of church government, in its essential principles, was appointed by the authority of Christ; and that it is the duty of all churches to adopt this form; but they do not believe that the whole platform of government is laid down in detail in the word of God, nor that differences in such ecclesiastical arrangements merely, will destroy, or essentially vitiate, the character of a church.

63. *Have different forms of church government been adopted by different churches of professing christians?*

Yes, there have been several different forms of church government adopted by different denominations of professing christians.

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SECTION II.

*Of the presbyterian form of church government.*

64. *What form of church government do you believe to be most agreeable to the word of God, and therefore to be most properly entitled to the claim of divine right?*

That plan of church government which is denominated presbyterianism.

65. *What is the origin of the word presbyterianism?*

The word is taken from scripture, in which the ministers of the church are called presbyters or elders.

Acts 14: 23. And when they had ordained them elders (that is, presbyters) in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 1 Tim. 4: 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

66. *Were there in the times of the apostles, churches which were called by different names, and which yet claimed to be the true churches of Christ, such as the episcopalian church, the Roman catholic church, &c.?*

No, we read of no such names in scripture.

67. *By what name, then, were believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time, called?*

Believers were at first called disciples, and afterwards christians, and their churches after the place in which they were located.

68. *When were these various names, by which the church is now distinguished, introduced?*

They were introduced at various times, as different opinions arose on the subjects to which these names refer.

69. *Why was the term presbyterian applied to those by whom it is now received?*

When those scriptural principles on which the equality of ministers, and the government of the church by presbyters depend, were subverted or denied, this name was adopted to hold forth the attachment of those who embraced it, to that form of church government, and to those doctrines which are sanctioned by scripture, in opposition to those forms and doctrines which are founded on human authority, and which had usurped their place.

70. *Do presbyterians acknowledge any man to be their head or founder, by whose name they are called?*

No; they call no man master on earth; neither do they acknowledge any other foundation, for their system of faith and government, than the word of God.

*71. What are the essential principles of the presbyterian form of church government?*

The supreme headship of Jesus Christ; the official equality of its ministers; the office of ruling elders, as representatives of the people; the election of the officers of particular churches by church members; and the authority of its several courts.

*72. What is further essential to the constitution of the presbyterian church?*

It is essential to the constitution of the presbyterian church, that all her pastors be equal in authority; that the government and discipline in each particular church be conducted by a bench of presbyters or elders, and not by all the communicants; and that all the several churches be bound together under the authority of presbyteries, and other courts of review and control, as circumstances may render expedient and necessary.

*73. Is it, then, necessary, in order to constitute any particular church presbyterian, that it should be in formal connection with a presbytery?*

It has certainly been the unvarying doctrine of the presbyterian church, founded on the word of God, that all particular churches should be united together, under one presbyterial government; and that any church, therefore, which remains in a state of isolated independency, or goes back to that condition, cannot be considered as a truly presbyterian church.

*74. What do you mean by the supreme headship of the Lord Jesus Christ?*

By the supreme headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, I mean, that under him the whole number of the elect shall be collected into one house and family of God; that he has given to the catholic visible church the ministry and ordinances, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; that he doth, by his own presence and spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto; and that further, besides the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no other head of the church, having authority to legislate for it, or to frame laws and institute officers, binding on the consciences of men.

Psa. 2: 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Matt. 28: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. 1 Pet. 5: 3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. See also Matt. 27: 22. Col. 1: 18. Eph. 1: 22. Matt. 23: 8-10. 2 Thess. 2: 4. Eph. 4: 11-23.



## CHAPTER III.

### OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

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#### SECTION I.

*Of the extraordinary officers of the church,—the apostles, evangelists, and prophets.*

75. *How many kinds of office-bearers did Christ appoint in his church?*

Two kinds; extraordinary and ordinary officers.

Eph. 4: 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

76. *What do you mean by extraordinary officers of the church?*

The extraordinary officers of the church, were persons endowed with supernatural gifts and extraordinary authority; of which kind were apostles, evangelists, and prophets.

77. *For what purpose were they appointed?*

Christianity, requiring a series of miracles to attest its divine origin, and inspiration to reveal all necessary truth, these officers were appointed to make known authoritatively the will of Christ; settle the constitution of the church; and commit the administration of it to ordinary and permanent officers.

Titus 1: 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 2 Tim. 2: 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. See also Eph. 4: 11-13.

78. *Had these any successors in their character and duties, as extraordinary officers?*

None that we read of in the word of God; neither are we there told, that any should succeed them as apostles, evangelists, or prophets.

Acts 14: 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

79. *What was necessary to constitute an apostle?*

It was necessary that the apostles should have personally seen the Lord Jesus Christ; have obtained their commission immediately from Christ; be endowed with the gift of working miracles; be able to communicate miraculous powers to others; and possess authority over all the churches in every part of the world.

1 Pet. 5: 1. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. 1 Cor. 9: 1. Am I not an apostle? am I not

free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? Acts 19: 6. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. 1 Cor. 7: 17. But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so ordain I in all churches.

#### 80. *Who were evangelists?*

Evangelists were extraordinary officers, suited to the infant state of the church, who were commissioned to travel under the direction and control of the apostles, that they might ordain ministers, and settle congregations, according to the system laid down by Christ and his apostles.\*

Acts 21: 8. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven,) and abode with him.

#### 81. *Who were prophets?*

They were persons, who, under the direction and extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, explained the scripture, enforced its doctrines, publicly addressed the church, and foretold events.†

1 Cor. 14: 1, 3, 4. Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men for edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church.

#### 82. *Were these extraordinary officers of the church exclusively occupied in the discharge of their extraordinary functions?*

No; they probably took an active part in the government of the church; while they certainly engaged in the ordinary duties of the ministry.

See Acts 10: 44, 47; 15: 6, 22; 21: 17, 18; and 6.

#### 83. *In what sense, then, are the present ministers of the gospel successors to these extraordinary officers of the apostolic churches?*

In their extraordinary character and functions, those officers can have no successors; but in their ordinary character, all

\*'The work of an evangelist,' says Eusebius, 'was this; to lay the foundation of the faith in barbarous nations; to constitute their pastors; and, having committed to them the cultivating those new plantations, they passed on to other countries and nations.' 'Such were evangelists,' says Stillingfleet; 'who were sent, sometimes into this country, to put the churches in order there, sometimes into another; but, wherever they were, they acted as evangelists, and not as fixed ministers.'

†See Henderson on Inspiration, p. 209, &c., and Lord Barrington's Wks. vol. i. p. 33.

In their ordinary character, the prophets were presbyters, as appears from Acts 13: 1-3, and as is fully admitted by archbishop Potter in his work on the Church. (See pp. 101-103, &c.) So, also, in their ordinary character as ministers of Christ, the apostles expressly denominate themselves presbyters. (See 2 John 1. 3 John 1. 1 Pet. 5: 1. Acts 7: 10. Philem. 8: 9. Acts 7: 58, &c.) And by every means they identify themselves with such; while Timothy, an evangelist, was, as we are expressly taught, ordained by the hands of a presbytery. See Tim. 4: 14, and Potter, do. 107.

ministers of the gospel, regularly called, who maintain the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, are their true and valid successors.

1 Cor. 12: 28, 29. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. 1 Cor. 13: 8. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. See Rev. 2: 2. Titus 1: 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. Acts 2: 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. See also Eph. 4: 11, 12. Rom. 12: 7, 8. 1 Tim. 3: 5.

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#### SECTION II.

*Of the ordinary and perpetual officers of the church,—and first of the presbyter or bishop.*

84. *Who are the ordinary officers of the christian church?*

Presbyters or elders, ruling elders, and deacons.

Phil. 1: 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Acts 20: 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

85. *Is there any distinction amongst those who are called elders?*

Yes; elders are divided into the teaching elders or pastors, and the ruling elders or helps.

1 Cor. 12: 28. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, *helps, governments*, diversities of tongues.

86. *What warrant is there for regarding the teaching presbyter, pastor, or bishop, as an ordinary and permanent officer in the church?*

Such officers were settled by apostolic authority, in every church, as its stated ministry; they are of God's appointment; they are the fruit of Christ's exaltation; and they are called by the Holy Ghost, that they may feed the church of God on earth.

Acts 14: 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Titus 1: 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. See also Eph. 4: 11. Acts 20: 28.

87. *What are the duties of the pastor?*

It is the duty of the pastor to preach the gospel, and to explain and enforce the scriptures; to conduct the different parts of public worship; to dispense the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; to administer church discipline; to oversee the religious state of persons and families; and thus to rule, in the church, according to the laws of Christ.

2 Tim. 4: 3. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Acts 13: 15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 1 Cor. 10: 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ. 1 Tim. 5: 20. Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Acts 20: 28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 1 Tim. 5: 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

88. *What different names has the person, who fills this office, obtained in scripture?*

The person who fills this office, has, in scripture, obtained different names, expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed 'bishop.' As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is called 'pastor.' As he serves Christ in his church, he is styled 'minister.' As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed 'presbyter, or elder.' As he is the messenger of God, he is denominated 'the angel of the church.' As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, through Christ, he is named 'ambassador.' And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed 'steward of the mysteries of God.'

Acts 20: 28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Jer. 3: 15. And I will give you pastors, &c. 1 Pet. 5: 1-4. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof. Rev. 2: 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write 2 Cor. 5: 20. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ. Luke 12: 42. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.

89. *Are these names expressive of different gradations of ecclesiastical authority?*

No; they are indiscriminately applied, in scripture, to the same officers; so that among the ministers of the gospel there is no other superiority to be allowed, than such as arises from the influence of age, piety, learning, or zeal.

Matt. 20: 26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. 1 Tim. 5: 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.



## SECTION III.

*Of the identity of bishops and presbyters.*

90. *What title of the christian pastor has been supposed to refer to a superior office in the church?*

The title of bishop.

91. *What is the literal meaning of the word bishop?*

The word (*ἐπισκοπος*, *episcopos*,) translated bishop, signifies an overseer.

Acts 20: 28. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

92. *Are all presbyters called bishops in scripture?*

Yes; they are called presbyters and bishops indiscriminately.

Acts 20: 17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders (that is, presbyters) of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (in the original, *bishops*,) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Phil. 1: 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Titus 1: 5-7. See also 1 Pet. 5: 1, 2. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. 1 Tim. 3: 1-7; 5: 17-19. See also Acts 15: 2, 4, 6, 22, 23. 1 Cor. 12: 28-30. Eph. 4: 11.

93. *Is not the pastoral office the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness?*

Yes; teaching is more honorable, and more important, than mere ruling, which is the office ascribed to prelatie bishops; and therefore a ruler, or prelate, cannot be superior to a teacher or pastor.

1 Tim. 5: 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. 1 Cor. 12: 28. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

94. *Is there more than one final commission, from which christian ministers derive their office and authority?*

No; all pastors derive their office and authority from Christ by the same commission, in the same words, and for the same offices, and, therefore, the same official authority must belong to all.

Mark 16: 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

95. *May it not be said, that while all bishops are presbyters, all teaching presbyters are not bishops?*

As all bishops are presbyters, so is the title of bishop, which signifies an *overseer* of the flock, applicable to all presbyters

who have the oversight of some particular charge, and who are therefore true scripture bishops.\*

96. *How may this identity of bishop and presbyter be further proved?*

Nowhere in scripture are duties imposed on bishops, distinct from those assigned to presbyters; nor are the qualifications laid down for the one, different from those laid down for the other. On the contrary, both are to possess the same qualifications, and to discharge the same duties, and are therefore the same.

Titus 1: 5, 7.

97. *Were Timothy and Titus prelatical bishops?*

They were not prelatical bishops; nor do they appear to have had any fixed pastoral charges. They were evangelists.†

2 Tim. 4: 5-10. But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry. . . . Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. See also 2 Cor. 8: 23. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you. 2 Cor. 12: 18. See question 54.

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#### SECTION IV.

*Of the term angel, as used in reference to the church.*

98. *What other term, in scripture, has been supposed to refer to an office in the apostolic church, superior to the ordinary bishops or presbyters?*

The term, angel of the church.

99. *Where is this term used?*

It is used in reference to the seven churches of Asia, in the book of Revelation.

See Rev. 2.

100. *What is the meaning of the term angel?*

The word angel signifies a messenger, and may be applied to any servant of God that bears a message from him, which the presbyter or bishop, by the express nature of his office, does.

101. *Are these angels said to be superior to the ordinary bishops or presbyters of the churches of Asia?*

No; they are not any where so described.

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\*The term, however, is also applicable to one who has filled this station, when transferred, by the authority of the church, and under its sanction, to some other field of usefulness; and, in a general sense, to all ordained ministers of the gospel.

†Now, of this matter, (whether Timothy and Titus were indeed made bishops, the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete,) I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name.' Whitby, (an Episcopalian,) in comment pref. to Titus, 'It is notorious, that Timothy is nowhere called a bishop by Paul. in either of the Epistles written to him.'

102. *Are the bishops or presbyters of the churches of Asia named separately, so as to allow us to suppose that the angel of the church was a different officer?*

They are not.

103. *Why, then, was the term angels used, instead of the word bishop?*

Probably, because the whole book in which it occurs is very figurative in its style; and has, therefore, been always regarded as more difficult to be understood than any other in the whole Bible; and because a special prophetic message was communicated, through these angels, to their respective churches.‡

104. *Have we reason to suppose that the term angel would be familiar to the apostle John, who used it, and to the Jewish, and other early christians, to whom it was addressed?*

We have such reason, in the fact, that the term angel was the name of an officer in the Jewish synagogues, which were established in every part of the world where there were Jews.

105. *Would this use of the word angel, by the inspired writer, suggest to his readers, when first employed, the idea of an officer, distinct from, and superior to, the ordinary bishop or presbyter of a christian church?*

No, it would not: because, in every Jewish synagogue, there was (just as there is now in every presbyterian church) a bishop, with a bench of elders and deacons; and this bishop was indifferently called minister, pastor, presbyter, bishop, or angel of the church; just as the bishop of a presbyterian church might be now called bishop, presbyter, pastor, minister, or angel of the church.§

‡It may be added, that, 1. The term angel is itself obscure. 2. It is used in an obscure book. 3. It is nowhere else applied in scripture to the bishop's office, if it is here. 4. It is a term which never has been brought into use in application to this office.

'The angel and the presbyter of the synagogue were congregational.' Bp. White's Lect. on the Catechism. Philad. 1813. p. 462.

§Dr. Lightfoot, who was himself an episcopalian, in giving an account of the officers of the synagogue, says: 'Besides these, there was 'the public minister of the synagogue,' who prayed publicly, and took care about the reading of the law, and sometimes preached, if there were not some other to discharge this office. This person was called, 'the angel of the church,' and 'the chazan or bishop of the congregaton.' The public minister of the synagogue, himself, read not the law publicly; but, every Sabbath, he called out seven out of the synagogue, (on other days fewer,) whom he judged fit to read. He stood by him that read, with great care observing that he read nothing either falsely, or improperly; and calling him back, and correcting him, if he had failed in any thing. And hence he was called *ἐπισκοπος*, or 'overseer.' Certainly, the signification of the word 'bishop,' and 'angel of the church,' had been determined with less noise, if recourse had been made to the proper fountains; and men had not vainly disputed about the signification of words, taken, I know not whence. The service and worship of the temple being abolished, as being ceremonial. God transplanted the worship and public adoration of God,

106. *What other meaning may be attached to the word angel, as used in the word of God?*

It may signify the moderator, who, at that time, presided among the bishops of these several churches, and who was their official organ of communication; or it may signify these bishops, in their collective capacity.

Rev. 2: 8, 10, 13.

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SECTION V.

*Of the permanence, calling, and ordination, of bishops.*

107. *Is the office of pastor, or bishop, designed to be permanent in the church?*

The pastor, or bishop, being commissioned to preach the gospel, and administer its ordinances, for the conversion of sinners, the edification of believers, and the conviction of gain-sayers, is, necessarily, a permanent office in the church.

Acts 26: 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Matt. 28: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

108. *What are the qualifications of a bishop?*

To be qualified for the office of bishop, a man must give satisfactory evidence that he is sound in the faith, and that he has good talents for public speaking, sincere piety, and a blameless character.

1 Tim. 5: 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. 2 Tim. 2: 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Titus 2: 7, 8. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

109. *May any individual, who supposes that he possesses these qualifications, take upon himself the office of a bishop?*

No; he who properly takes upon himself the office of a bishop, must be called of God.

Heb. 5: 4. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Jer. 23: 32. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err, by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord. 1 Tim. 5: 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. Rom. 10: 15. And

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used in the synagogues, which was moral, into the Christian church; to wit, the public ministry, public prayers, reading God's word, and preaching, &c. Hence, the names of the ministers of the gospel were the very same, 'the angel of the church,' and 'the bishop,' which belonged to the ministers in the synagogues.' See Works, vol. xi. p. 88.



how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

110. *What do you mean by being called of God, to the work of the ministry?*

This call is twofold; divine and ecclesiastical.

111. *When may an individual be said to have a divine call to the office of bishop?*

When he has given evidence, that he possesses the qualifications necessary to fit him for it; and when he feels impelled by an earnest desire to enter it, that he may thereby be enabled to serve God in the gospel of his Son.

1 Tim. 3: 1. This is a true saying; if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Titus 1: 7-9. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

112. *When may an individual be said to be called to the office of bishop, ecclesiastically?*

When the presbytery, composed of the bishops and elders of the churches, within whose bounds he resides, receive, approve, and admit him to that office, in the hope and belief that he has been divinely called.

1 Tim. 4: 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 2 Tim. 2: 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

113. *Is there any thing, besides this call, necessary to constitute an individual a christian bishop?*

Yes; he must be ordained.

Titus 1: 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 1 Tim. 2: 7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity.

114. *What is the meaning of the word ordain?*

To ordain means to appoint; or, to set apart to an office; or, to invest with a ministerial function or authority.

115. *How is the bishop, or presbyter, ordained?*

He is ordained, by the imposition of the hands of the ministers, constituting the presbytery, and by prayer.

1 Tim. 5: 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure. Acts 13: 3. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 1 Tim. 4: 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

116. *Is ordination necessary, in itself considered, or only as a security for the order and purity of the church?*

Ordination is not to be regarded as conveying any hidden or mysterious grace or power to the person ordained. It is no more than an external and solemn form, whereby the person ordained is recognized as one who is believed to have been called, and thus authorized, by God; and who is, in this way, installed into the sacred office of the ministry. Neither is this rite to be considered so essential, as that, without it, a valid ministry, and a true church, could not, in any possible circumstances, exist.

117. *What name is applied to those, who are preparing for the ministry, in the belief that they have received a divine call?*

They are called candidates for the ministry.

118. *What name is applied to those, who have been allowed by presbytery to preach, and thus prove their fitness for this work?*

They are called licentiates; because they have received a license, or authority, to exercise their gifts.

119. *By what other name are such persons sometimes called?*

Probationers; because, until ordained, they are on trial, and may have their license withdrawn or confirmed.

120. *When an individual is ordained to the office of a bishop, is he set apart to some particular charge?*

Sometimes he is ordained, by the presbytery, as an evangelist, or a missionary, to labor where there are no existing churches; but, ordinarily, he is ordained over some particular charge.

Titus 1: 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 1 Pet. 5: 1, 2. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Acts 20: 17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

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#### SECTION VI.

##### *Of ruling elders.*

121. *What is the next officer in the church, after the bishop, or presbyter?*

The ruling elder.

122. *Why is this officer called the ruling elder?*

Because he is appointed to assist the bishop, who is the teaching elder, in the government of the church; and from whom he is, in this way, distinguished, by being called the ruling elder.

123. *Whence was this name derived?*

From the order of the Jewish synagogue, in which, besides a bishop, who was also called presbyter or elder, there was a bench of elders, who were associated with the bishop in authority.

124. *What powers did these elders possess in the Jewish synagogue?*

The general powers of government and discipline.

125. *Are ruling elders recognized in scripture?*

They are; for we read there of helps and governments, and of the brethren who were associated with the apostles and presbyters in the early councils of the church.

1 Cor. 12: 28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. See also Rom. 12: 8. Acts 2: 15, 26; 6: 1-6; and 15; and Matt. 18: 15-17. See p. 8.

126. *From what other consideration may we deduce the necessity and scriptural propriety of ruling elders?*

The power of the church was vested by Christ in the whole body of its members; but as these cannot all meet together to transact business, or all act as officers, there must be ruling elders or delegates appointed by them for these purposes.

127. *What passage of scripture is most generally regarded as expressly alluding to ruling elders?*

That passage in which the apostle Paul says, 'let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.'

1 Tim. 5: 17.

128. *What is the general duty of ruling elders?*

To act with the bishop or pastor, as 'helps and governments' in the exercise of ecclesiastical authority; and to watch over the flock, assist in the admission or exclusion of members, warn and censure the unruly, visit and comfort the afflicted, instruct the young, and exhort and pray as opportunity may be given.

129. *Do ruling elders possess authority, equally with the bishops, as rulers of the church?*

Yes, as rulers, though not as teachers.

130. *In what respect are they, with other members of the church, to be in subjection to the bishop?*

As the bishop is ordained not only to rule, but also to teach, elders are equally bound, with the other members of the church, to obey him in the Lord, and to receive his instructions, as far as they are agreeable to the word of God.

1 Tim. 5: 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. 1 Pet. 5: 1. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

131. *Is it necessary that such officers should be associated with the pastor, for the wise management of the affairs of the congregation?*

As the bishop or pastor of a congregation must employ a good part of his time in studying the scriptures; in preparing for preaching; in qualifying himself, by various reading, for the defence of the gospel; in attending upon the judicatories of the church; in watching over the general concerns of the church, and in promoting its welfare; the co-operation of such officers is altogether indispensable to the prosperity of any congregation.

Acts 6: 2-4. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. See also James 5: 14. Acts 15: 4-6.

132. *What are the qualifications necessary for the office of ruling elder?*

The qualifications for the office of ruling elder are, sincere piety, sound principles, a capacity for judging, prudence, zeal, and unblemished reputation.

2 Tim. 2: 21. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 1 Chron. 12: 32. And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment. 1 Tim. 3: 4-7. One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

133. *Whom do ruling elders represent in the church?*

As the pastor represents the ministry, so ruling elders represent the members of the church.

134. *By whom are ruling elders chosen to their office?*

As they represent the members of the church, so are they elected to their office by them.

135. *How are ruling elders invested with their office?*

Having been called by the church, and elected by it, they are solemnly set apart to their office with prayer, or with prayer and the imposition of hands.



136. *What number of elders should there be in every church?*

Such a number as will enable them fully to discharge all the duties incumbent upon them, towards all its members.

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SECTION VII.

*Of deacons.*

137. *What is the third spiritual officer in the church?*

The deacon.

138. *Is it a part of the duty of the deacon to teach, or to rule in the church?*

No; it is not said to be the duty of deacons either to teach or to rule, in any part of scripture.

139. *How is the office of deacon distinguished from that of ruling elder?*

The ruling elder, as a representative of the people, sits as a spiritual officer in all the judicatories of the church; but deacons are officers only of that particular church by whose members they are elected, and are not competent, therefore, to sit as members in any one of the judicatories of the church.

140. *What is declared in scripture to be the express duty for which deacons were appointed?*

Deacons were appointed for the purpose of managing the temporal affairs of the church, and especially to attend to the wants of the poor, by inspecting their state and supplying their wants.

Acts 6: 1-3. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 1 Tim. 3: 8. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

141. *But did not Philip, who was appointed a deacon, afterwards teach and baptize?*

Not while he was a deacon, so far as can be known from any record in the word of God; but when afterwards he became an evangelist, he then received and exercised authority to teach and baptize.

Acts 21: 8. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven,) and abode with him.

142. *Is there a necessity for such officers as deacons in the church of Christ?*

Christian congregations should make provision for those among them, who are incapable of procuring for themselves the necessities of life; and officers are very requisite to find out and visit such persons, and to manage the funds raised for their support.

143. *Is it very advisable that the temporal relief given by the church should be administered separately from its spiritual instructions and consolations?*

This is very advisable, to prevent hypocrisy, and an undervaluing of such spiritual communications.

144. *What are the qualifications necessary for a deacon?*

A deacon should possess piety, integrity, diligence, and respectability.

1 Tim. 3: 8-12. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued; not given to much wine; not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

145. *In the distribution of the funds to the poor, are the deacons responsible, and in subordination, to the teaching and ruling elders?*

They are; for we find that, even after their appointment, the apostles and elders had in trust the collections made for the poor.

Acts 11: 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

146. *How are deacons elected to their office?*

They are elected by the suffrages of the members of the churches to which they belong; and are set apart by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the pastor and elders.

See Acts 6.

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SECTION VIII.

*Of the election of officers.*

147. *Have the members of churches an undoubted right to choose their own pastors, elders, and deacons?*

Yes; churches, in common with all other free societies, have this privilege.

Acts 1: 15, 26. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty;) and they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Acts 6: 5. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. 2 Cor. 8: 19.

And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind.

148. *How should church members discharge this duty?*

In a spirit of meekness, humility, peace, and prayer; with a supreme regard to the glory of Christ, and the spiritual interests of the church; and without partiality or respect of persons.

Phil. 2: 3. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Acts 1: 24. And they prayed, and said, thou Lord, which knoweth the hearts of men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen. 1 Cor. 10: 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. James 3: 17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

## CHAPTER IV. COURTS OF THE CHURCH.

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### SECTION I.

#### *Of ecclesiastical courts in general.*

##### 149. *What is meant by an ecclesiastical court?*

An ecclesiastical court is an assembly of those, who have the original and inherent power or authority of executing laws and distributing justice, according to the constitution; 'and, in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.'\*

150. *Is it lawful, for the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, that the rulers of the christian church should meet in regularly organized courts?*

It is both lawful and necessary.

Acts 15: 6. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter. Matt. 18: 15-20. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. 1 Cor. 14: 33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

##### 151. *How many kinds of church courts are there?*

Four; the session, presbytery, synod, and general assembly.

##### 152. *Of whom are these several courts composed?*

Of bishops and ruling elders, as representatives of the ministers and the people.

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### SECTION II.

#### *Of the church session.*

##### 153. *What is the church session?*

The church session is composed of the pastor, when there is one, and the ruling elders, of any particular congregation, met together as a church court.

154. *What scriptural authority is there for the church sessions, or, as they may be termed, congregational presbyteries?*

Scripture teaches us, that there was a plurality of elders in the churches formed by the apostles; to whom was committed

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\*See Confession of Faith, ch. xxxi, sec. 2; and Form of Government, ch. ix, x, xi, and xii.



the government of the church, and who, in order to act together, must of necessity have met in council.

Acts 14: 23. And when they had ordained them elders (that is, presbyters) in every church, and had prayed, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Titus 1-5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. See also Matt. 18: 15-20.

155. *What further evidence does scripture afford, for such church courts?*

The titles, given by the Holy Ghost to ecclesiastical offices and officers, are such as import a power of judging causes; and express the same authority which the elders in Israel were accustomed to exercise in ecclesiastical matters.

156. *What are some of these titles?*

The officers of the church are called guides, or leaders,\* bishops, or overseers,† elders,‡ rulers,§ heads,\*\* and governors.††

\*Heb. 13: 7, 17, 24, comp. with Josh. 13: 21, Deut. 1: 13, Micah 3: 9. Acts 7: 10; 23: 24, 26, 33. 1 Pet. 2: 14. †Acts 20: 28, &c., comp. with Numb. 31: 14, Judg. 9: 28, 2 Kings 11: 15, in the Greek. ‡Acts 14: 23, &c., comp. with Judg. 8: 14, Ruth 4: 2, 3, 2 Sam. 5: 3, 1 Chron. 11: 3. §Acts 23: 5, with Exod. 22: 28, Matt. 9: 18, Luke 8: 41, John 3: 1, Rom. 12: 8, 1 Thess. 5: 12, 1 Tim. 5: 17.

157. *How should the business of the session be conducted?*

The meeting of the session should be constituted by prayer, each member being called upon by the moderator, (who is, by right of office, the pastor or minister present,) to give his opinion, and every question being decided by a majority of votes.

158. *Who are subject to the authority of the session?*

All the members of that particular church, in which the session exists.

159. *Over what matters has the church session authority?*

The church session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation; for which purpose they have power to inquire into the knowledge and christian conduct of the members of the church; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments, those who are found to deserve censure; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.

Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. See also 1 Thess. 5: 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5: 17. Ezek. 34: 4. 2 Thess. 6: 6, 14, 15. 1 Cor. 12: 27. Acts 15: 2, 6.

160. *How may any matters be brought before the session, for its judgment upon them?*

Either by an elder, or by any member of the church presenting a memorial, or preferring a complaint, or tabling charges.

161. *Is there any appeal from the judgment of the session, by a party, supposing himself aggrieved?*

Yes; there is an appeal from the session to the presbytery.

162. *What is the duty of the members of the church, towards their session?*

To respect and uphold their authority, as given to them by Christ; to render a cheerful obedience to their decisions, as in the Lord; cordially to co-operate with them, in those plans of usefulness they recommend; to strengthen their hands by prayer; to honor their character, though, like themselves, imperfect men; and to receive, and seek their advice, in all spiritual difficulties and distresses.

1 Thess. 5: 12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves. Heb. 13: 17.

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#### SECTION III.

##### *Of the presbytery.*

163. *What is the next court of the church?*

The presbytery.

164. *What is the meaning of the term presbytery?*

It simply means an assembly of elders.

165. *How is the presbytery, considered as a court of the church, constituted?*

A presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.

166. *What is the extent of its jurisdiction?*

The authority of the presbytery extends to its own members, and to the several sessions and congregations belonging to it.

167. *What is the design and use of a presbytery?*

It is a court of appeal from church sessions; it affords an opportunity for mutual consultation and advice; it is a bond of visible union; an authority, to which common submission is due, and by which is ordered whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care.

168. *What is the scripture warrant for presbyteries, as courts of the church?*

The first argument is found in the ordinance of God, instituted by Moses, by which particular congregations were taught to bring their hard and difficult controversies to a superior

ecclesiastical judicatory.\* This order was re-established by Jehoshaphat, who established an ecclesiastical senate at Jerusalem, to receive complaints and adjudge causes brought before them.† This form of government is also commended unto us by David, as the praise of Jerusalem.‡ So that the ecclesiastical assemblies and synagogues in Israel were not independent, but were under the government of superior courts.

\*Deut. 17: 8-12. †2 Chron. 19: 8-11. ‡Ps. 122: 4, 5.†

169. *But how does this afford any authority for such courts now?*

Because they formed no part of the ceremonial law, but were based upon the principles of common and perpetual equity; and therefore are such courts equally accordant to the divine will, and advantageous to the church, now.

170. *What other argument can you give, for the establishment of such courts in the christian church?*

They are enjoined by that rule of discipline, laid down, by our Lord, for its government: 'tell it unto the church.'§ For, since Christ here gave no new rule, the christian church not being organized, but appeals to one already familiar, he must have referred to the practice of the synagogue discipline, already described; and must, therefore, be considered as teaching, that particular churches are not independent, but are to be in subjection to superior judicatories.

§Matt. 18: 15-20.

171. *How does this appear?*

Our Saviour here points out to us, in cases of offence among brethren, three degrees of admonition; a censure to be passed upon contempt of this admonition; and, finally, excommunication, in case of obstinate impenitence. But we know that this is exactly accordant to the Jewish plan, and that this very authority was, among them, committed to their councils.\*

Lev. 19: 18. Prov. 11: 13. Deut. 17: 9-11; 19: 15. 2 Chron. 19: 10. Exod. 12: 19. Numb. 15: 30, 31, and Gal. 5: 12. Ezra 10: 8, and Gal. 1: 9. Matt. 9: 11. Luke 15: 2. Acts 11: 2; 21: 28, 29. See also Calvin and Beza, on Matt. 18: 17.

172. *May we not also establish the authority of such courts, by a reference to the practice of the apostles, and the order of the first churches?*

Yes; the scriptures prove that several distinct congregations were regarded as one church, and were under one common government.

\*See also Paget, on the Power of Classes and Synods, London, 1641, p. 35, &c.

†That which the church of the Jews called the synagogue, Christ, in like manner, here calls the church; for, as the synagogue was a certain epitome of the church, so is the presbytery. Junius Ecclesiast. B. ii, c. 3.

1 Tim. 4: 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Acts 15: 2, 4, 6. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small discussion and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders; and they declared all things that God had done with them. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter.

173. *What illustration of this can you give?*

The several cases of the churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Samaria.

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SECTION IV.

*Of a presbytery at Jerusalem.*

174. *How may it be inferred that there were more congregations than one at Jerusalem?*

First, from the great number of converts that were added to that church.

Acts 2: 41, 42, 46. Then they that had gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 4: 4. Howbeit many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. Acts 5: 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Acts 6: 1. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Acts 21: 20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law. Acts 9: 31. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Acts 12: 24. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Compare Acts 1: 15.

Secondly, from the many apostles and other preachers who labored in that church.

See the preceding references.

Thirdly, from the diversity of language found among these believers, and the necessity hence arising for distinct assemblies.

See Acts 2d and 6th chapters.

Fourthly, from the fact, that the Lord's supper was administered in different houses at the same time.

Acts 2: 46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart.

175. *How may it be shown, that these several congregations were under one presbyterial government?*

First, because all these congregations are denominated one church.

Acts 8: 1. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against THE CHURCH which was at Jerusalem;



and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 2: 47. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 5: 11. And great fear came upon all the church. See also Acts 12, and 15: 4.

Secondly, because the elders of the church are expressly mentioned.

Acts 11: 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 15: 4, 6, 22. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and of the apostles and elders. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Acts 21: 17, 18. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.

Thirdly, because the apostles performed the duty of presbyters, in the church of Jerusalem.

Acts 10: 44, 47. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Acts 21: 17, 18. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present. See also Acts 6, and 15: 6, 22.

Fourthly, because these presbyters and elders met together, as one body, for acts of government.

See as before. Acts 15: 6, 22; 21: 17, 18.

Fifthly, because, while they worshipped God and observed his ordinances in different assemblies, they were, nevertheless, united under one common government.

Acts 2: 16. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. Acts 2: 44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common

*176. But granting there were many different congregations at Jerusalem, united under one presbytery, are we to consider this example binding upon other churches?*

It was expressly foretold that out of Zion should come forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and since the apostles continued together for some years at Jerusalem, we must necessarily conclude, that the government of this church was left for our imitation, and that in the constitution of all other churches, their members were united together like it, under the direction of presbyteries.

Isaiah 2. Phil. 3.\*

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#### SECTION V.

*Of a presbytery at Ephesus, and in other places.*

*177. May the same conclusion be inferred respecting the church at Ephesus?*

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\*See Bastwick's Utter Routing, p. 463, &c.

Yes; first, from the length of time the apostles labored there.

Acts 20: 31. Therefore, watch; and remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Secondly, from the success which attended their preaching.

Acts 19: 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. Acts 17: 18. Then certain philosophers of the epicureans and of the stoics encountered him; and some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection, &c.

Thirdly, from the number of believers found there.

Acts 19: 17-20. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men.

Fourthly, from the reasons Paul assigned for his continuance there.

1 Cor. 16: 8, 9. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Fifthly, from the multitude of bishops or pastors there.

Acts 20: 17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Sixthly, from the mention of one of these congregations, in such a way as to imply the existence of others.

1 Cor. 16: 19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. Rev. 2: 17. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Seventhly, from the evident union of these churches under one presbyterial government.\*

Rev. 2: 1, 2, 6, 17. Unto the angel of THE CHURCH of Ephesus write. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto THE CHURCHES.

178. *May the same inferences be made as to the churches at Corinth, and at Antioch, at Caesarea, and at Samaria?*

Yes; as appears from there being more churches than one in these cities; while they are, nevertheless, called one church; and also from there being many pastors there at the same time.

See, as to Corinth, Acts 13: 1, and 18: 7-10; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 14: 29; 13: 34; 14: 3, 4; 5: 4, 5; 2 Cor. 2: 6. As to Antioch, Acts 11: 19, 20, 25, 29, 30; 13: 1, 5; 15: 35. As to Samaria, Acts 8: 5, 6, 12, 14. As to Caesarea, Acts 11: 30.

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\*An eighth argument, is this. The church of Ephesus consisted of both Jews and Gentiles, as appears from Acts 18. Paul was desired to stay with the Jews, to whom, as appears from chapter 19: 8, he preached for three months; and yet the Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed specially to those who were heathen, when there must have been one or more congregations of converted Jews.

## SECTION VI.

*Of the presbytery,—concluded.*

179. *You have now established the authority of presbyteries from the discipline of the synagogue, from our Saviour's positive rule, and from the order of the apostolic churches; is there any other source of evidence?*

Yes; in the practice of the apostles, as we shall see when we consider the case of the synodical assembly at Jerusalem.

Acts 15.

180. *Is it necessary that all churches should be thus united together in one presbyterial government?\**

All the churches of Christ are certainly under obligation to conform to that primitive and scriptural order, which is divinely authorized.

Phil. 4: 9. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

181. *Why are they under this obligation?*

Because the church, being a divine institution, and not a mere voluntary or human society, particular churches are not at liberty to set at naught any of the rules of Christ's kingdom, and are therefore bound, if they have opportunity, to combine themselves into presbyteries, for their spiritual government.

182. *Do they, by neglecting this order, commit evil?*

Yes; all that neglect it offend against the communion of saints, and walk not as members of the body of Christ.

Rom. 12: 5. 1 Cor. 12: 25. Eph. 4: 16.

183. *Do congregations, and their members, owe submission to the decrees of their presbyteries?*

Such decrees are recognized by Jesus Christ, so far as they are accordant to his statutes, as contained in the word of God; and to resist them, therefore, is, in such a case, to despise the authority of Christ.

Matt. 16: 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts 4: 19.

184. *Of what sin are churches guilty, who thus reject the scriptural determinations of their ecclesiastical courts?*

Those churches which reject the sentence and determination of their church courts, when consonant to scripture, commit a double sin; first, by transgressing against the written word of God; and, secondly, by despising the ordinance of God, and

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\*See this fully advanced by Alexander Henderson, as quoted in Dr. McCrie's Miscell. Writ. p. 86.

throwing contempt upon the authority of his officers. For churches are just as much bound to their superior courts, as are individual members to their particular churches; that is, so far as they act according to the truth and will of God.

185. *Is there any appeal from the decision of the presbytery?*

Yes; an appeal can be taken from the decision of the presbytery to the synod.

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SECTION VII.

*Of the synod.*

186. *What is the third court of the church?*

The synod.

187. *What is the meaning of the term synod?*

The word synod means an assembly of persons, of one faith, and for the same purpose.

188. *Why, then, is this church court called a synod?*

As the presbytery is a convention of the bishops and elders, within a certain district, so a synod is a convention of the bishops and elders, within a district so large, as to include within it at least three presbyteries; or it may be defined a larger presbytery.

189. *What is the scriptural warrant for holding synodical assemblies?*

A synod composed of the rulers from several churches met, disputed, and determined a subject then controverted in the churches, in the city of Jerusalem; as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

See Acts 15. Eph. 4: 11-16.

190. *Is there any other ground on which the authority for holding such assemblies rests?*

Yes; they are in accordance with the procedure of the Jewish synagogues, which were all subordinate to the sanhedrim, or ecclesiastical court, held in Jerusalem, to which Christ refers with approbation, and which were the model after which the christian church was fashioned.

See Matt. chap. 18, compared with Deut. 17: 8-12. See also Matt. 13: 54. Mark 6: 2. Luke 4: 6, and 7: 5. James 2: 2. Rev. 2: 9.

191. *Does the power of the synod interfere with that of the presbytery?*

No; it is designed to strengthen that power, and extend it.

192. *What power does the synod possess?*



The synod has power to receive and issue all appeals, and to decide on all references brought up from presbyteries; to review their proceedings; and generally to take such order with respect to presbyteries, sessions, and people, under their care, as may be in conformity with the word of God, and for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

193. *Is there any appeal from the judgment of the synod?*

Yes; there is an appeal to the general assembly, the greatest and highest court of the church.

#### SECTION VIII.

##### *Of the general assembly.*

194. *How, then, do you describe the general assembly?*

It is the highest judicatory of the church, representing, in one body or court, through their bishops and elders, which are delegated by the presbyteries, all the particular congregations under its jurisdiction; it being, in fact, a larger synod.

195. *Is there any warrant for such an assembly of the rulers of the church, in the scriptures?*

There is a warrant for it in the council held at Jerusalem, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts.

1 Cor. 14: 40. Let all things be done decently, and in order. Ezek. 43: 12. This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. See also 2 Chron. 19: 8.

196. *Will you state the grounds of this opinion?*

First, a question which arose at Antioch, affecting the faith and practice of all the churches of Christ, was referred, for settlement, to this assembly.

Acts 15: 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.

Secondly, This assembly consisted of the rulers of the church, while it was open to the people.

Acts 15: 6, 12. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Thirdly, this assembly decided the question submitted to it, not by inspiration, but after discussion; and, as would appear, under the ordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 15: 7, 22, 28. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas,

and Silas, chief men among the brethren. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.

Fourthly, we find, that, in this assembly, one member proposed a resolution, which was unanimously adopted as the opinion of the whole body.

Acts 15: 19, 22. Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.

Fifthly, the decision, which was thus made, was authoritative, extended to all the churches, and was sent down to them, and read in them.

Acts 15: 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. Acts 16: 4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees, for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

And, sixthly, the members of this synod were delegated, not by any single individual or prelate, but by the presbytery of Antioch, in conjunction with the other churches.

Acts 15: 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.

197. *But may it not be objected to all this, that the brethren, that is, all the people, were present at this council, as well as the presbyters?*

From what we have already seen, it is most certain that but a small part of the believers then in Jerusalem could have met together in any one place, and, therefore, that these brethren must have been delegated by the several churches, into which these false teachers had entered, to sit in this council, for the right ordering and well managing of the matters submitted to its decision.\*

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#### SECTION IX.

*Of the other bodies appointed by the church.*

198. *Who has the power of calling these several councils, or church courts, together?*

The right of calling and dissolving all ecclesiastical courts is, by the Head of the church, exclusively vested in church officers.

Matt. 16: 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

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\*See Bastwick's Utter Routing, London, 1641, pp. 430-434.

199. *While these are the regular and constitutional courts of the church, is it lawful and proper for the church to appoint other bodies, for the purpose of carrying out its plans, and executing its will?*

These several courts of the church certainly have power to appoint any body, to carry into execution any plans or operations which it is competent for these courts severally to undertake; provided, they do not themselves transcend the powers given to them by the constitution, or give to these bodies powers greater than they themselves possess.

200. *What bodies of this kind are employed by the several courts of the church?*

There are committees, to prepare or finish any assigned business; agents, to discharge any specified duty, on behalf of the body appointing them; and boards, or committees, to whom is intrusted the management of the various benevolent operations in which the church is engaged.

## CHAPTER V.

### POWER OF THE CHURCH.

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#### SECTION I.

*Of the nature of church power, and the independence of the church of the civil government.*

201. *Do the officers of the church possess any authority over its members?*

Every office implies some authority; and a church officer, without power to sustain his office, would be an anomaly.

202. *Why is such power necessary to the officers of the church?*

Because the members of the church, as such, are separated from the rest of mankind, and profess to believe in Christ; and it is made the duty of church officers to preserve this character of the church.

203. *Is this power clearly ascribed to the officers of the church, in scripture?*

Yes; obedience is required, from all the members of the church, to those who rule over them in the Lord.

Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

204. *Is the power, which church officers possess, such as to affect the civil interests of men?*

No; it is altogether ecclesiastical, and such as to affect men only in their relation to the church, and to God.

John 18: 36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

205. *How else may you describe this power of the church?*

It is spiritual, and addressed to the consciences of those who are subject to it, in contrast to the Jewish polity, which was external, carnal, and typical.

Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

206. *In what respects is this power, or government of the church, spiritual?*



Its objects are spiritual; namely, the souls and consciences of men. Its end is spiritual; namely, the glory of God, in the instruction, guidance, and salvation of men. Its law is spiritual; namely, the word of Christ, in its institutions, commands, prohibitions, and promises. Its acts and exercises are spiritual; namely, the admission, exclusion, or discipline, of its members. And its sanctions are spiritual; namely, the withdrawal of spiritual privileges, and the threatening of future and everlasting retribution, at the hand of the Judge.

See Luke 17: 21. Heb. 9: 10, 14; and 8: 10. Jer. 31: 33. Heb. 7: 16, 18.

207. *To what does the power of the officers of the church extend?*

It belongs to them, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints, in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same; and, generally, to devise such plans as will best advance the interests of the kingdom of Christ.

208. *What are the means, which are employed by church officers, for the maintenance of this spiritual power?*

The means employed, by church officers, to secure this obedience, are commands, entreaties, promises, threatenings, and censures; which are all intended to affect the heart only, and not the property, liberty, or personal security, of the members of the church.

209. *Does the very word power, as applied to any office in the church, imply, that he who exercises it is himself under the authority of a superior?*

Yes; power implies the execution of superior orders, by one who is subordinate to that superior.

Matt. 23: 8-10. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ.

210. *In what sense do church officers possess authority?*

By right of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they represent, and who is sole master in the church.

Matt. 17: 5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

211. *Have church officers any power or authority, even in ecclesiastical matters, independently, or in themselves considered?*

None whatever; they act altogether ministerially.

Phil. 1: 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.

2 Cor. 4: 5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake. See also Acts 16: 4; 15: 15-31. Matt. 18: 17, 18, 19, 29.

212. *What is the source and limit of all ecclesiastical authority?*

The word of God, to which it is subjected, and by which it is restrained.

Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Matt. 28: 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 4: 4.

213. *What is the end, for which all such authority is committed to the church?*

The apostle Paul declares it to have been given for edification, and not for destruction.

2 Cor. 8: 10. And herein I give my advice; for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. 2 Cor. 13: 10. Therefore, I write these things, being absent, lest, being present, I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me, to edification, and not to destruction.

214. *What is the name given to that opinion, which maintains that the church possesses no power, and that the office of its rulers consists solely in instructing and persuading the people?*

It is called Erastianism, from Erastus, its author, a physician, who lived in the sixteenth century.

215. *Do presbyterians ascribe any power to the church, which interferes with the authority of the state?*

No; presbyterians maintain, that the church is independent of the state, and distinct from it.

216. *Is the christian church, then, entirely independent of the civil government?*

Yes; so far as it regards the laws, officers, and duties, of the church, it has an indefeasible right to an unrestrained and independent jurisdiction in all things sacred; so that, as the church cannot interfere with the civil power, in the management of civil concerns, neither can the civil power interfere with the church, the supervision and control of all things sacred.

217. *What, then, is the duty of the state to the church?*

Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments, or in the least interfere in matters of faith; yet, as nursing-fathers, it is their duty to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of christians, above the rest, in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons, whatever, shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty, of discharging

every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates, to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner, as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury, to any other person whatsoever; and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

John 18: 36. Mal. 2: 7. Acts 5: 29. Is. 49: 23. Ps. 105: 15. Acts 18: 14-16.

218. *What is the duty of the church, to the state?*

It is the duty of the church to pray for all in authority; to respect their persons; to pay them all just tribute, and other dues; to obey their lawful commands; and to be subject to their authority, for conscience's sake. It is also the duty of the church to preach the gospel to all men, including those who are in authority; to bear witness for Christ; to assert the authority of his laws, and to require obedience to them.

Rom. 13: 1-7. Acts 25: 10, 11. Tit. 3: 1. 1 Pet. 2: 13-17.

219. *Is this power of the church of great importance to be known and preserved?*

Yes; this independent and spiritual jurisdiction of the church cannot be abandoned, without sacrificing the honor of Christ, the glory of his kingdom, the very constitution and being of the church, and all liberty, civil and religious.\*

220. *How may this spiritual authority and independence of the church be violated or lost?*

The spiritual authority and independence of the church may be lost, by yielding to any usurpation of ecclesiastical power by the civil authorities, or to any ecclesiastical dominion, which dispenses with Christ's laws, or assumes His authority. Such usurpation, we are, therefore, to resist, if needs be, even unto blood, as derogatory to the supremacy and glory of Christ.

Heb. 2: 8, 10. Gal. 4: 7. 2 Cor. 4: 4. 1 John 2: 16, 17, 22. Rev. 17: 8, 11. 2 Thess. 2: 3, 4. Matt. 12: 30. Col. 2: 10, 19. Matt. 4: 24.

221. *Do presbyterians desire, then, any alliance between their church and the state?*

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\*Civil and religious liberty depend upon the fact, that the province of the civil power is entirely separate and distinct from that of the ecclesiastical, and cannot, therefore, rightly, and ought not, in any case, be made to interfere with each other.

On the contrary, they believe, that any such alliance ever has been, and ever will be, equally injurious to the state, and to the church; and that it is to be deprecated by every christian, as the baneful source of corruption and intolerance.

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SECTION II.

*Of true liberty of conscience.*

222. *Can church officers enact any thing, contrary, or in addition, to the word of God, and make it binding on the conscience?*

No; God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.

Rom. 14: 4. Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.

223. *Is it proper for any ecclesiastical officers to require implicit faith in that, for which no scriptural warrant can be given; or an absolute obedience to mere ecclesiastical decrees, without such plain warrant?*

No; this is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts 17: 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word, with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. John 4: 22. Ye worship, ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. Hosea 5: 11. Ephaim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. Rev. 13: 12, 16, 17. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

224. *Ought any man, out of conscience, to believe any such doctrines, or to obey any such commandments?*

No; to do so would betray their liberty of conscience.

Col. 2: 20, 22, 23. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom, in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. Gal. 1: 10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Gal. 2: 4. And that because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily, to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. Gal. 5: 1. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.



225. *Does liberty of conscience mean a liberty to transgress or neglect any of God's commandments?*

No; that would be licentiousness, and not liberty.

226. *Does liberty of conscience mean freedom from all obedience to the authority of church officers, as far as they administer faithfully the laws of Christ?*

No; they who oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be ecclesiastical or civil, resist the ordinance of God.

1 Peter 2: 13, 14, 16. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. See also Heb. 13: 17. Rom. 13: 1, 8.

227. *What, then, do you mean by liberty of conscience?*

True liberty of conscience is freedom from the enforcement of any doctrine or commandment of men, that is in any thing contrary to the general rules of God's word, or beside it, either in matters of faith or worship.

Acts 4: 19. But Peter and John answered, and said unto them, Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Acts 5: 29. Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said, We ought to obey God, rather than men. 1 Cor. 7: 23. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Matt. 23: 8, 10. But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. 2 Cor. 1: 24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand. Matt. 15: 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

228. *Can any article of faith be believed, on any other authority than that of the written word of God?*

It cannot; for it is not given to any man, even were he an apostle, to exercise dominion over our faith; while a curse is pronounced upon any man, who will either add to, or take from, this book.

2 Cor. 1: 24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand. Rev. 22: 19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

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#### SECTION III.

*Of the divisions of church power,—and first of its dogmatic power.*

229. *What are the different parts of the power of the church?*

The power of the church is commonly divided, according to the nature of the objects about which it is employed, into three parts.

230. *What is the first part of the power of the church?*

That which is called dogmatic, or which respects articles of faith.

231. *Has the church power to make such articles?*

All protestants agree in believing, that the scriptures contain all the truths which it is necessary for man to know; and that they constitute the only infallible rule of faith.

232. *What other rule does the church of Rome adopt?*

The church of Rome adopts another rule of faith, called tradition; by which she means a summary of doctrine which is in the possession of the church, besides that contained in scripture, and which is of equal authority with the scriptures themselves.

233. *Is there any foundation for this doctrine of tradition in the word of God?*

The scriptures, on the contrary, denounce the severest anathema upon any who will add to, or take from, the written word of God.

Rev. 22: 18, 19. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Gal. 1: 9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. See also Deut. 4: 2, 12, 32. Prov. 30: 6. Isa. 8: 20. Matt. 15: 3-6. Col. 2: 8.

234. *What has been the result of the adoption of tradition, as a standard of doctrine, in the church of Rome?*

It has introduced into the creed of that church human dogmas, and grossly erroneous tenets; for which she demands implicit reception, under pain of being accursed.

235. *What, then, is the power of the church, as it regards the scriptures?*

The church is the depository of the scriptures; and bound to preserve them, pure and unadulterated.

1 Tim. 3: 15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

236. *What further power has the church, in reference to the scriptures?*

It is the duty of the church to explain the scriptures, and to call upon all men to study, believe, and obey them for themselves.

Mal. 2: 7. For the priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. John 5: 39. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. See 2 Tim. 3: 15. Col. 3: 16. Rom. 15: 4. Acts 17: 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

## SECTION IV.

*Of confessions of faith.*

237. *Has the church the right to draw up summaries of christian doctrines; as, for instance, confessions of faith and catechisms?*

In order to exhibit to the world her views of the scriptures; to oppose prevailing heresies and errors; to instruct her children and people; to ascertain the sentiments of candidates for admission into the ministry; and to secure harmony and uniformity in her public ministrations; it is the privilege and duty of every church, to draw up such summaries of christian doctrine.

238. *What authority do these summaries possess, in themselves considered?*

They have, in themselves considered, no more authority than any other human compositions.

239. *From what, then, is their authority derived?*

The authority of such summaries is derived solely from their conformity to the scriptures.

240. *Are such summaries to be regarded as infallibly correct?*

No; the only infallible rule for the interpretation of scripture, is scripture itself.

Rom. 12: 6. Let us prophecy (or teach) according to the proportion (or analogy) of faith. John 5: 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

241. *Does our confession of faith claim any other power over those who receive it?*

No; for it is stated in that confession, that 'all synods or councils, since the apostles' times, may err, and many have erred; therefore, they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help to both.'

See chapter xxxi.

242. *Can you state any other declaration, which that confession makes of the same purport?*

Yes; it declares, that 'it belongeth to synods and councils ministerially, (that is, as ministers of God's word,) to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience;' and that their 'decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission.'

See chapter xxxi. 2. See also chapters i. ix. and x. and chapter xx. at large.

243. *How, then, do you reconcile the authority claimed for these standards, with that supreme authority which is ascribed to the word of God?*

No individual is compelled to receive these standards, contrary to his own voluntary choice; and in submitting himself to the authority of the church, every individual declares that he receives its standards, *because*, after full examination, he believes them to contain the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures.

See Form of Government, chapter xv. 12.

244. *You have said, that no individual is required to adopt these standards; will you now inform me whether any individual who may have adopted them, is at liberty, should he see fit, to withdraw his declaration of full belief in them?*

Should any individual be led to regard any part of these standards as contrary to the word of God, it is his privilege and duty to release himself from that obligation; or otherwise, as a man of honor, to maintain and defend them so long as he continues to act as a minister or elder of the church.

245. *Is there any thing in this to interfere with true liberty of conscience?*

Nothing; for while such a course is adapted to secure peace and harmony, and united action, it also preserves and maintains true liberty of conscience.

246. *Who are required explicitly to adopt and promise obedience to the standards of the church?*

Bishops, licentiates, elders, and deacons.

See Form of Government, chap. xv. 12, chap. xiv. 7, and chap. xiii. 4.

#### SECTION V.

*Of the second part of the power of the church, to enact rules for its government or order.*

247. *What is the second part of the power of the church?*

The power to enact rules for its government or order.

248. *Does this mean, that the church has power to establish any form of government which shall appear most eligible?*

No; as far as there is a particular form laid down in scripture, that form cannot be altered without usurping the authority of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 8: 5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

249. *Does this mean, that the church has power to make new laws to regulate the moral conduct of its members?*

The church, as we have already shown, has no legislative, but only a ministerial authority; and her office consists **SOLELY**



in publishing and enforcing those laws which the Head of the church has already enacted.

250. *Has the church power to decree rites and ceremonies, as is taught in the articles of the Church of Rome, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church?*

There is no scriptural warrant whatever for this opinion; and we, therefore, believe, that the church assumes a power which does not belong to her, when she makes any addition to the institutions of Christ, and requires their observance, on pain of censure or excommunication.\*

251. *What other matters come under this power of the church, to enact rules for government and order?*

It belongs to the church to appoint the times of public worship, and on what other occasions its members shall join in the solemn exercises of religion.

252. *Are there any other matters included under this power of enacting rules?*

It is also the province of the church to point out the order of public worship, to fix the bounds of congregations and presbyteries, and to make all other arrangements, which are necessary to secure harmony and order.

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#### SECTION VI.

*Of the third division of the power of the church, or the power of discipline.*

253. *What is the third and last part of ecclesiastical power?*

The power of discipline or jurisdiction.

2 Cor. 10: 8. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for destruction, I should not be ashamed.

254. *Is this power necessary to every society?*

Yes; in every society of men, some power is necessary to preserve the common peace, and to maintain concord.

255. *Has any person a right to admission into the christian church, without regard to its rules or regulations?*

No; only those who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ, can be admitted as members of the church of Christ.

Acts 8: 37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 1 Cor. 1: 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Matt. 28: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

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\*For a notice of some of the objectionable results of the exercise of this power, see chap. vii. sect. 2.

256. *Why may not others, also, be admitted into the church?*

Because its privileges, by their very nature, are intended only for those who, in the judgment of charity, are disciples of Christ.

John 17: 6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Acts 19: 9. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

257. *By what means is this character of the church, as a society of professing christians, to be preserved?*

By the faithful exercise of a scriptural discipline, in enforcing the observance of her laws, and by censure and excommunication.

1 Cor. 5: 7. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. (See context.)

258. *Why is this exercise of discipline necessary to the purity and peace of the church?*

Because offences must frequently arise, from unregenerate professors, and from the remaining corruptions of those who are truly pious.

Matt. 18: 7. Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh! Rev. 2: 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

259. *Who are to exercise this discipline?*

The officers of the church.

Matt. 28: 19. Acts 14: 23. Matt. 16: 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 18: 15-18. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

260. *How far does this power of church officers extend?*

It is their province to judge who may be admitted to the church; to inspect their conduct when received; and to censure and expel such as prove to be unworthy.

2 Tim. 4: 2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Titus 2: 15. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. 1 Cor. 5: 12. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

## SECTION VII.

*Of admission to, and exclusion from, the church.*

261. *Are only those who are really saints, to be admitted into the church?*

That any man is *really* a saint, can be known only to God; and, therefore, the officers of the church, not having knowledge to discern the heart, cannot determine the secret state of the soul.

262. *By what rule, then, are they to be guided in the reception of members into the church?*

They are to be guided solely by the outward profession which is made, of inward faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 8: 12. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 19: 18. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

263. *When is a person to be regarded as making a credible profession of christianity?*

When such an individual manifests an acquaintance with the leading doctrines of the gospel; declares himself a believer in them; professes that his heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God; and maintains a conduct becoming the gospel.

Rom. 10: 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Acts 16: 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. Luke 3: 8. Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

264. *Do the members of the church, after their admission to it, continue subject to the authority of its rulers?*

Yes. Such authority on the one part, and obedience on the other, are most plainly sanctioned by the law of Christ.

1 Cor. 5: 12, 13. Heb. 13: 17.

265. *For what offences are members of the church liable to its censure?*

For errors in doctrine;\* for immorality in practice;† for despising the authority, order, or ordinances of the church;‡ and for neglecting the public, domestic, and secret duties of religion.§

\*Rom. 16: 17. Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. Titus 3: 10. A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.

†2 Chron. 23: 19. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in. Eph. 5: 11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 1 Cor. 5: 11. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with

such a one no not to eat. Rev. 2: 20. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

†1 Cor. 11: 2. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 2 Thess. 3: 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

§Heb. 10: 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. Jer. 10: 25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name; for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate. Matt. 6: 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

266. *Are all offences to be followed by the same degree of censure?*

No; according to the nature of their several offences, some should be rebuked, others suspended from the privileges of the church, and others excommunicated, or entirely cut off from all connection with the church.

Titus 1: 13. This witness is true; wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. 2 Thess. 3: 14, 15. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 1 Cor. 5: 13. But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Gal. 5: 12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. 1 Tim. 5: 20.

267. *Do the scriptures attach a very solemn importance to the censures of the church?*

They do; for they declare that the sentence of the church, when pronounced according to the scriptures, is confirmed and ratified in heaven.

Matt. 18: 18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 1 Cor. 5: 5. To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Tim. 1: 20. Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

268. *What should be the conduct of those who have been, in either of these ways, subjected to the discipline of the church?*

They should humble themselves under it; and seek grace to repent and do their first works.

1 Peter 5: 6. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Rev. 2: 5. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candle-stick out of his place, except thou repent.

269. *When may a person who has been suspended be restored to the communion of the church?*



Whenever sufficient evidence has been afforded of his repentance and reformation.

Gal. 6: 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a none in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. John 20: 23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

270. *Are any censures of the church to be made public?*

Yes; when the offences are of such magnitude and publicity as to bring scandal upon the church.

2 Cor. 2: 6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 1 Tim. 5: 20. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

271. *Is the church injured by the neglect of discipline?*

Yes; for thereby godly persons will be deterred from entering it; the anger of God provoked; and Christ's name dishonored.

1 Cor. 5: 11. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat. 1 Cor. 10: 20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Rev. 18: 4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Jer. 7: 11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. 2 Samuel 12: 14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. Rom. 2: 24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Eph. 4: 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

272. *May a church, by the utter neglect of discipline, cease to be a true and living church of Christ?*

Yes; this has happened.

Rev. 2: 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Rev. 3: 9, 16. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.\*

273. *On the other hand, are there many and great benefits arising from the exercise of strict and faithful discipline?*

Yes.

274. *What benefits may arise to the offender from the exercise of discipline?*

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\*'As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline form the ligament which connects the members together, and keeps each in its proper place. Discipline, therefore, serves as a bridle to curb and restrain the refractory, who resist the doctrine of Christ; or as a spur to stimulate the inactive; and sometimes as a father's rod, with which those who have grievously fallen may be chastised in mercy and with the gentleness of the Spirit of Christ.' Calvin's Institutes, chap. xii. book iv. vol. ii. page 365.

By this he sees sin to be evil and shameful; and if he receive the censure in a proper spirit, it has a powerful tendency to humble, reclaim, and edify him.

2 Thess. 3: 4. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 2 Cor. 7: 9, 10. Now I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.

275. *What benefits arise to the church from the faithful exercise of discipline?*

Hereby sinners are discouraged from hypocritically joining the church, and the leaven which might infect the whole lump is purged out;\* the number of her true converts is increased;† her holiness is manifested;‡ the honor of her Head is vindicated;§ and God's gracious presence and blessing secured.\*\*

\*1 Cor. 5: 7. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.

†Acts 16: 4, 5. As they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem; and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Acts 5: 11, 13, 14. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And of the rest, durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord; multitudes, both of men and women.

‡John 2: 16. Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

§Ezek. 36: 23. The heathen shall know that I am the Lord. saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

\*\*2 Cor. 6: 17, 18. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

276. *But may not the offender, by the exercise of discipline, be led to forsake the preaching of the gospel, and thus become more hardened?*

As discipline is an ordinance of God, we must expect the neglect rather than the exercise of it to harden the sinner; but if, in his pride and obstinacy, he disregard the advantages which flow from it, when received in a right spirit, the rulers of the church are not to be deterred from *their* duty, any more than the minister of the gospel from preaching, because many are hardened by it, and have their guilt and dangers increased.

2 Cor. 2: 15. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life. Jude 19. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

277. *Are the rulers of the church deeply responsible for the right exercise of discipline?*

They who hold office by appointment from Christ, whose faithfulness will be followed by so many and great blessings, whose negligence must be the source of such deep and lasting injuries to the church, dishonor to Christ, and evil to sinners, should feel themselves under a most solemn responsibility in

this matter, and must expect to be called to a most strict account, at the day of judgment, for the part which they act in relation to it.

1 Pet. 5: 4. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy; and not with grief.

*278. How may each member of the church fully understand all its rules, and order of discipline?*

By studying the Form of Government and Book of Discipline attached to the Confession of our Faith, and which every member of our church should possess.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

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#### SECTION I.

*Of the nature and necessity of church fellowship.*

279. *Is a knowledge of the true nature, constitution, and design of the church, important to all its members?*

It is important; for otherwise they will be in ignorance of those duties, which they are under obligation to discharge, as members of the church.

Ezek. 44: 5, 8. And the Lord said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary. And ye have not kept the charge of my holy things; but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Matt. 5: 9. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

280. *Who are members of the visible church of Christ?*

Thost who have been admitted into it on profession of their faith and obedience, together with their children.

Acts 2: 38, 39, 47. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

281. *Is it the duty of all, or only of some, to become members of the church of Christ?*

It is the unquestionable duty of all who hear the gospel, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and then to become members of his visible church.

Acts 2: 38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 10: 9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 1 John 1: 3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may also have fellowship with us; and, truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

282. *What are the ends of church fellowship?*

The ends of church fellowship are, that christians may hold forth the doctrines of the Bible; maintain the ordinances of the gospel, uncorrupted; promote their mutual holiness and edification; and thus become fitted for glory.

Col. 2: 2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.



Rev. 2: 25. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. Phil. 2: 15. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Col. 1: 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

283. *What are the privileges of members of the church?*

The participation of the Lord's supper; the baptism of their children; pastoral oversight; the sympathy and prayers of the church; the special promises of God; and the right of deciding upon all matters referred to them, relative to the spiritual interests of the church.

Isa. 4: 5, 6. And the Lord will create, upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow, in the day-time, from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. 1 Tim. 4: 10. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. Acts 2: 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Ps. 147: 19, 20. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord. Rom. 9: 4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

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SECTION II.

*Of the duties of church members.*

284. *What duties do members of the church owe to their pastor?*

They should submit to his just and scriptural authority; love and esteem him; attend constantly upon his ministrations; co-operate with him in every good work; liberally support him; and earnestly pray for him.

1 Thess. 5: 13. And to esteem them very highly in love, for their work sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Heb. 13: 7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. See also 1 Cor. 16: 15, 16. 1 Thess. 5: 11, 12. 2 Cor. 1: 11.

285. *What duties do the members of the church owe to one another?*

They should love one another; visit each other in affliction; pray for one another; when necessary, exercise forbearance and charity; watch over one another; and endeavor to live in peace and harmony.

Gal. 6: 2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. James 5: 16. Confess your faults, one to another, and pray, one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Eph. 4: 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Rom. 12: 13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 1 John 3: 17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his

bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Lev. 19: 17. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. See also 1 Pet. 5: 5. Phil. 2: 3.

286. *What duties do members of the church owe to the church itself?*

They are bound to support it; to take a deep and active interest in all its concerns; to seek its prosperity by all lawful means; and cordially to submit to its discipline.

1 Cor. 16: 2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

287. *What is the duty of members of the church to themselves, as individuals?*

To grow in knowledge, in grace, and in communion with God; and to lead holy and exemplary lives.

John 5: 39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. Ps. 1: 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

288. *What is the duty of members of the church, as heads of families?*

To maintain family prayer; to set a holy example; and to govern and direct their children, and servants, in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Gen. 18: 19. For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Ps. 118: 15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. Jer. 10: 25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name. Eph. 6: 4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nature and admonition of the Lord.

289. *What is the duty of church members, as citizens?*

They should live peaceful, holy, and unblamable lives, in all honesty and fidelity; adorning the doctrines of God our Saviour; and, as far as lieth in them, securing a good report of them that are without.

290. *What is the duty of members of the church, as it regards property?*

They should remember, that, in the possession of whatever amount of property they have, they are stewards for God, and must render an account to him, of the manner in which it has been used, for the furtherance of his glory.

2 Cor. 9: 7. Acts 11: 29. See also Prov. 3: 9. 1 Tim. 6: 17. Rom. 10: 14, 15.

291. *Is a refusal thus to contribute to the support and spread of the cause of Christ severely reprov'd in scripture?*

Yes; it is distinctly said to be a sign of a graceless state; while, on the contrary, liberality is regarded as one evidence of christian character.

1 John 3: 7. 1 Cor. 6: 10. Eph. 5: 5. Prov. 21: 26. See also Ezek. 18: 7, 9. Ps. 112: 5, 9. 2 Cor. 8: 1-8, 24.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RELATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS, AND TO THE WORLD.

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#### SECTION I.

##### *Of Romanism.*

#### *292. Did the church of Christ always continue pure?*

Even from the very time of the apostles, the church was greatly distracted by numberless heresies and superstitions, of the most extravagant description; and the bishops of Rome, pretending to be the successors of the apostle Peter, gradually subjected all the other churches to their control, and, at length, showed that they were that antichrist, which had been foretold.

2 Thess. 2: 3-7.

#### *293. When did the church of Christ throw off the yoke of Rome?*

Various churches and individuals attempted, at different times, to throw off the yoke of the church of Rome, some of whom only partially succeeded, while all of them were persecuted, and many destroyed; till, at length, God raised up Luther, who, assisted by the German princes, protested against the authority of the pope; and thus, ever since the church of Christ has been a protestant church.

#### *294. Is the term protestant properly applicable to the presbyterian church?*

It is properly applicable to it, in common with all the other reformed churches.

#### *295. Why are these all denominated protestant?*

Because they still adhere to that solemn protest, which was made, by the reformers of the sixteenth century, against the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome.

#### *296. Name some of those errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, against which the church of Christ has thus protested.*

First, the church of Rome denies that the scriptures alone are a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Isa. 8: 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Acts 17: 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word, with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruct-

tion in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. John 5: 39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.

Secondly, it receives oral traditions, as of equal authority, in religious matters, with the scriptures; and thus substitutes human authority for the word of God.

Matt. 15: 3, 6. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, by your tradition? Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Gal. 1: 8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Col. 2: 8. Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Prov. 30: 5, 6. Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Rev. 22: 18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

Thirdly, it makes the apostle Peter the foundation of the church, and thus destroys the only true foundation, which is laid in Zion.

1 Cor. 3: 11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Acts 4: 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Fourthly, it teaches that the pope of Rome is the visible and supreme head of the universal church, and thus denies the fundamental doctrines of the headship and supremacy of Christ.

Eph. 1: 22. And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church. Col. 1: 18. And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

Fifthly, it conducts the prayers of the church in an unknown tongue, so that they cannot be profitable to the people.

1 Cor. 14: 9, 11, 14, 19. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

Sixthly, it pays divine worship to the virgin Mary, which is idolatry.

Matt. 4: 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Phil. 2: 9, 10, 11. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Seventhly, it teaches its members to pray to saints and angels, as mediators or intercessors, while there is, as scripture teaches, but one mediator between God and man.

Rev. 19: 10. And I fell at his feet, to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the



spirit of prophecy. 1 John 2: 1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 Tim. 2: 5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. 8: 6. But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Eighthly, it uses images in worship, and pays adoration to the sacramental elements, and the images of saints, which is also idolatry.

Exodus 20: 4, 5. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Ninthly, it teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, which is at once absurd and idolatrous.

1 Cor. 11: 26, 28. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Tenthly, it teaches the doctrine of purgatory, which is pagan in its origin, debasing in its tendency, and contrary to the express teaching of scripture.

1 John 1: 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 2 Cor. 5: 2. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Phil. 1: 23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Rev. 14: 13. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

Eleventhly, it teaches the superstitious observance of times and places.

Twelfthly, it enjoins self-righteous penances.

Thirteenthly, it assumes the power of granting dispensations and indulgences, which is to put itself in the place of God.

Fourteenthly, in direct opposition to scripture, it teaches the necessity and virtue of the celibacy of the clergy.

Against these, and many other errors of the church of Rome, the presbyterian church, in common with all the reformed churches, bears its testimony, as being antichristian, and, in their tendency, destructive to the souls of men.

297. *By what title should this church be always spoken of?*

Either as the Romish, or the Roman catholic church, or the church of the pope, that is, the popish church.

298. *Why should you never speak of that church as the catholic church?*

Because, as has been shown, the term catholic, both as it means universal, and as it means orthodox, applies to all true

churches, and not to any one particular communion, such as the Roman, or Anglican.

299. *Do you, then, consider the application of the term catholic, to the Romish church, to be positively wrong?*

I do, for several reasons. 1. Such a use of the term is in itself absurd. 2. It is no distinction, as thus used, any more than the term christian would be, since it applies equally to other churches. 3. It is unjust, as it regards ourselves; for, when we call the Roman the catholic church, it is implied that we, ourselves, and all other churches, are heretics or schismatics. 4. It is uncharitable towards them, since it encourages them in their error, and affords to them a plausible argument against other denominations.\*

300. *In what sense may the Romish church be called a true church?*

The Romish church may be admitted to be a true church, inasmuch as it is a *real*, not a fictitious church; but it cannot be allowed to be a true church, in that sense of the word true, which would imply that it teaches true doctrines, or is conformed to the order and discipline laid down in the word of God. In this sense, the Romish is not only not the true church, but has no claim to the character of a true church at all.†

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SECTION II.

*Of prelacy.*

301. *What opinion is to be entertained of those churches, which, with an orthodox creed, have adopted the prelatic form of church government?*

They are to be regarded as churches of Christ; and yet, as not being, in their constitution and order, in full accordance with the word of God; and therefore imperfect.

302. *Why do you denominate theirs the prelatic, rather than the episcopal form of church government?*

For the same reasons, in part, why we refuse to speak of the Romish, as the catholic church; and, also, because we believe

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\*The use which they make of it, when it is conceded to them, cannot be unknown. Dr. Milner, in his *End of Religious Controversy*, (Letter xxv.) says of the (episcopal) church: 'Every time they address the God of truth, either in solemn worship or in private devotion, they are forced, each of them, to repeat, I believe in the catholic church; and yet, if I ask any of them the question, are you a catholic? he is sure to answer me, No! I am a protestant! Was there ever a more glaring instance of inconsistency, and self-condemnation, among rational beings?' See *Wheatley's Romish Errors*, p. 331. Let us, then, avoid, in future, this inconsistency and self-condemnation.

†See *Wheatley's Logic*, Appendix, Art. *Truth*, p. 381, Eng. edition.

our form of church government to be more truly the primitive and apostolical episcopacy, since the term bishop (that is *episcopos*, whence episcopacy) was, by the Holy Ghost, originally given to presbyters, and is applied to them throughout the New Testament.

See question 92.

303. *Do you, then, design to convey any reproach, by using the terms prelate, prelacy, and prelatic, instead of bishop, episcopacy, and episcopal, as applied to this denomination of christians?*

Certainly not, since, in so doing, we use terms which are constantly employed by their own writers, in a good sense; and by which this denomination may be better distinguished from others.

304. *Can you name some of the points in this prelatic system, to which presbyterians object, as being without support in the word of God?*

First, they object to the power claimed by prelatic churches, to decree rites and ceremonies, in the worship of God, and to institute offices in the church; Christ, alone, as king and head of the church, having any such authority.

Prov. 30: 6. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Rev. 22: 18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. 1 Cor. 6: 12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Ps. 2: 6. 1 Pet. 5: 3. See also Eph. 5: 23, and Matt. 28: 20.

Secondly, while they do not deny the propriety, or reject the use, of all forms of prayer, or of administering ordinances, they object to the imposition of a fixed and stated liturgy, which excludes all extemporaneous prayer; believing that it tends to prevent the exercise of spiritual gifts; to induce formality and deadness in devotion; and to prevent its adaptation to the state and circumstances of the church, and of individuals.\*

Acts 1: 24, 25. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell, that he might go to his own place.

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\*The Book of Common Order of the English Church at Geneva, drawn up by Knox, and approved by Calvin, was received, and approved, by the church of Scotland, and ordinarily prefixed to the Psalms in metre. Neither has the use of this truly excellent and beautiful order ever been proscribed, or forbidden; and its use, in a modified form, might be still advantageous. Like the liturgies of all the French presbyterian churches, it is not exclusive, but provides for the introduction of extemporaneous prayer, and for modifications. Its use has been lately recommended, in an edition by the Rev. J. Cumming, of the Scotch church in London. Our church also allows of forms of profession, baptism, and marriage.

Thirdly, they object to the appointment, and *stated* observance, of holy days, as being not only without scriptural warrant, but positively discountenanced by it; as interfering with the due sanctification of the Lord's day; as having originated in improper motives; and as necessarily leading to many and great evils.

Gal. 4: 9-11.

Fourthly, they object to the interposition, in baptism, of god-fathers, and god-mothers, between parents and their children. For this practice there is not a shadow of evidence in the New Testament, nor in the practice of the church, for five hundred years after Christ. It was unknown, also, among the Waldenses, and is to be regarded as one of the many superstitious usages, introduced into the church with the progress of corruption.

Fifthly, they object, for the same reasons, to the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, and, also, because it is associated with the superstition and idolatry of the Romish church, in which it is considered as essential to the validity of the ordinance of baptism, is applied in every step of religious life, and is formally and publicly revered.

Sixthly, they object to the rite of confirmation, because they can find no authority for it in the word of God, or in the purest ages of the church; because it is altogether superfluous, and answers no practical purpose, not otherwise provided for; because they regard the form of its administration as teaching dangerous and unscriptural doctrine; and because it serves to foster, in the minds of the young, the most delusive and self-righteous hopes.

Seventhly, they object to the practice of kneeling at the Lord's supper, because it is contrary to the posture assumed by Christ and his apostles, who employed that in which it was then customary to receive ordinary meals; because it was unknown in the christian church for a number of centuries; because it is opposed to that gladness, gratitude, and affectionate intercourse of which this ordinance is expressive; because it is a remnant of the Romish ritual, and of the adoration of the host; and because it was retained in the English church against the wishes of a large body of its most learned and pious divines.

Eighthly, they object to the *regular* administration of the Lord's supper in private, as opposed to the social character of this ordinance; as being unwarranted by scripture; as fostering superstitious notions of the inherent virtues of the sacrament; as liable to great and manifold abuses; and as likely to do much injury to many, both among the living and the dying.

Ninthly, they object to bowing, in the public service, at the name of Jesus. This, also, is without any authority from scrip-



ture. It attaches some superstitious virtue to one, among many other titles, of our blessed Redeemer. It seems to imply that the second person of the ever-glorious Trinity is entitled to peculiar adoration. And as it was first introduced about the fifteenth century, it should not be retained among a reformed christian people.

Tenthly, they object, for similar reasons, to the practice of praying toward the east; of wearing, in the reading-desk, or during the prayers, a white surplice; of speaking of the Lord's table as an altar, of the Lord's supper as a sacrifice, and of christian ministers as priests; these terms being pagan in their origin, Jewish in their spirit, and the last being at variance with the whole system of the gospel, and destructive of one of its most important characteristics.

They also solemnly protest against reading the apocryphal books, in any service regarded as connected with the worship of God, which is done continually in prelatich churches, on their holy days. These books form no part of the inspired word of God; they contain false doctrines, misstatements, and not a few things adapted to promote ridicule, rather than edification; and are acknowledged, by prelatists themselves, to be uncanonical, and very exceptionable in much that they contain.\*

305. *As some of these ceremonies appear unimportant in themselves, why is the observance of them a ground of serious objection?*

Because such observance encourages superstition and 'will-worship;' is opposed to the sufficiency of the scriptures, as the only rule of faith and practice, and to that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and upholds the unscriptural and pernicious principle, that men may innocently and profitably add to the institutions of Christ, and the terms of communion in his church, these ceremonies being regarded as mystical and significant.

Col. 2: 20, 23.

306. *Is there any thing else, to which presbyterians object, in the prelacy?*

Yes; they object to the power of ordination, and other ecclesiastical functions, being vested exclusively in the unscriptural order of prelates, since this makes void the word of God, and leads to spiritual despotism.

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\*The church of England, omits the public reading of two hundred and eleven chapters of the Bible, and substitutes one hundred and one chapters from the Apocrypha. The Homilies speak of Baruch as a prophet, and expressly ascribes the book of Tobit to the Holy Ghost. See Homily Ag. Disobed. and Rebellion, Part. i. p. 475, and on Almsdeeds, Part. ii. p. 328. These homilies make a part of the formularies of the episcopal church in this country. For a full exhibition of the grounds of our objection to these ceremonies, see Dr. Miller on Presbyterianism, &c. ch. v. p. 63, &c.

1 Tim. 4: 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Matt. 20: 25, 27. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Again; they object to the unscriptural distinction between consecration, or the setting apart of prelates, and ordination, or the setting apart of presbyters, to the work of the gospel ministry, as being wholly unauthorized by the word of God.

Further; they object to the doctrine, that, by water-baptism, an infant is regenerated, made a member of Christ, and a child of God; and to various other things, contained in the canons authorized by this church, and in the Book of Common Prayer.

James 1: 18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. 1 Pet. 1: 23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Finally, they lament the extreme laxity of many of the prelatical churches, in reference to the characters whom they admit to their communion and privileges, and the difficulties thrown in the way of any of their godly ministers attempting to exercise a scriptural discipline.

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#### SECTION III.

##### *Of congregationalism.*

307. *In what light do presbyterians regard those churches which adopt the independent or congregational form of church government?\**

As far as they hold to those doctrines which are regarded, by the presbyterian church, as the doctrines of grace, we consider them, also, to be true churches of Jesus Christ; but as defective, and not *fully* accordant to scripture, in their forms of government and discipline.

308. *Name some of the reasons why presbyterians object to this system of church government?*

First, they object to it because, so far as it makes each congregation independent of every other, it destroys the unity and power of the church.

1 Cor. 12: 12, 26, 27. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. John 18: 36. Jesus an-

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\*The reader should be apprized, that, in this place, congregationalism is considered, in its theoretic and essential principles, as a system. In its practical operation in this country, it is found acting upon those principles of consociation and union, both in ecclesiastical and benevolent matters, which gives such unity and strength to the presbyterian church, and is, therefore, essentially presbyterian.

swered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Secondly, they object to it because it is thus opposed to the constitution of the apostolic church, in which there existed ecclesiastical courts, as bonds of union between the churches.

See chapter IV.

Thirdly, they object to it because it destroys the original distinction recognized in scripture between the rulers or officers, and the members of the church.

Heb. 13: 17, 24. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.

Fourthly, they object to it because it unfits the church, in her distinctive character, and through her own organization, to perform her appropriate duty of extending the kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

Matt. 18: 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Fifthly, they object to it because it gives an unrestricted, and therefore unscriptural, power to its members in the government of the church.

See chapter III.

Sixthly, they object to it because it deprives the pastor, or any aggrieved member of the church, of the privilege of appealing to some court of review.

Acts 15: 2. When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

#### SECTION IV.

*Of the doctrine of the apostolical succession.*

309. *To what other doctrine, common to both Romanists and prelatists, do you object?*

To their doctrine of the apostolical succession.

310. *Is it not important that there should be a regular succession of scripturally appointed ministers?*

It is important as a matter of order, but it is not essential to the salvation of souls, since a broken succession can never frustrate the efficacy of the divine word, or an unbroken succession sanctify 'the doctrines of devils,' or the 'works of darkness.'

311. *Are there any who believe in the absolute necessity, in order to covenanted salvation, of such a succession?*

Yes; the popish church, and a large party in the episcopal churches of America and of England.

312. *What is meant by this doctrine of apostolical succession?*

By the prelatical doctrine of apostolical succession, it is taught, that as Christ delegated all power to his apostles, so have these apostles delegated it to the order of prelates in personal and perpetual succession; that these prelates are the sources of all spiritual grace and authority; are alone empowered to ordain other ministers, so that without them there can be no valid ministry at all; that they alone possess or can bestow the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and that without them, all preaching and ordinances are vain, delusive, and deprived of the promised blessing of Christ.\*

313. *Can this doctrine be proved from scripture?*

No; it is not even pretended that this doctrine can be found in scripture. It is granted, that it is not clearly revealed in the word of God; but that it depends upon tradition and the authority of the fathers.† This doctrine, on the contrary, is actually denounced by Christ; and is opposed to scripture declarations, warnings, and precepts, to its promises and prophecies, to its facts and decisions, and to the only remaining commission of the ministry.‡

Mark 10: 42, 43, and 9: 33-37. Matt. 23: 8-11.

314. *Can this personal succession be shown to have been preserved in a valid and unbroken chain?*

In order to show this, it must be proved, that the ordination of every prelate in this entire succession was valid, first, as to the form of ordination; secondly, as to the subject of ordination; and, thirdly, as to the ministers of ordination, which is an impossibility.\*\*

315. *Can this personal succession be proved as a historical fact?*

On the contrary, it cannot be proved, that the apostle Peter, the first link in this chain, was ever at Rome, or that he was ever bishop of Rome, or that he ever appointed a successor to himself, as such. Neither can it be decided, whether there were one or two bishops originally at Rome, nor who were the first successors in that church; while it is certain that many invalidities have occurred in the progress of this succession,

\*See the author's Lectures on the Prelatical Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession.

†See full proof of this position in author's Lectures, pp. 73, 83, 87, 99, 103, 133, 134, 136.

‡See *ibid*, lect. vi. and vii.

\*\*See *ibid*, lect. v.



both in its Romish, Anglican, and American branches, and also in all the other prelatic churches; and that it has been broken in numerous instances, and in innumerable ways. §

316. *Are prelaties really and in fact successors of the apostles?*

Prelates are not successors to the apostles, in fact. They are not apostles in the true sense of this title, which was limited to the twelve; nor in their call, which was immediately from Christ; nor in their endowments for their office, which were supernatural; nor in their office itself, which was the oversight and instruction of the whole world; nor in their duties, which involved the indoctrination, care, and government of ALL the churches.\*

317. *Can this doctrine be sustained on the ground of reason?*

No; it is most unreasonable, inasmuch as it substitutes the theory of man for the word of God; the visible organization and ministry of the church, for spiritual christianity; ordinances, rites, and forms, for doctrines and inward graces; the authority of the church, for the supremacy and headship of Christ; and the means of attaining salvation, by giving efficacy to the truth, for that salvation itself. †

318. *Does this doctrine necessarily lead to popery?*

This doctrine necessarily leads to popery, because it invests the church with all authority; because it subjugates the laity and the ministry to prelates; because it consigns to these prelates the interpretation of the word of God; because it has ever formed the basis upon which the system of popery rests its exclusive assumptions; because, wherever it has been carried out, it has led to the introduction of the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Romish church; and because it is now leading extensively to the same results. ‡

319. *Is this doctrine also intolerant in its tendencies and results?*

That this doctrine leads to intolerance in spirit and in practice, is proved from its history in all past ages; from the character and doings of many ancient and modern prelates; from its necessary tendency to exclude the laity from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to consolidate a spiritual despotism, and to claim absolute authority over the persons, conduct, and opinions of its adherents; from its bitter, sectarian, and uncharitable spirit

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§ See *ibid*, lect. viii. and ix.

\* See author's *Lectures*, lect. x.

† See *ibid*, lect. xiv.

‡ See *ibid*, lect. xi. and xii.

towards all other denominations; and from its clear opposition to civil and religious liberty.‡

320. *What further objection have you to this doctrine of apostolical succession?*

I object to it, because it necessarily implies that the church of Rome is truly catholic, apostolical, and indefectible in doctrine and practice, and that all other churches, being excommunicated by it, are cut off from the church of Christ; and because it is schismatical, leading its abettors, like the ancient heretics, to cut themselves off from all other christians, to assert that they alone constitute THE catholic church of Christ, and to deny to all other branches of the church either a valid ministry or efficacious ordinances; and because it is thus contradictory to the charity, to the spirituality, and to the divine character of the gospel.†

321. *Is this doctrine to be rejected because such claims might be advanced only by prelatists?*

On the contrary, presbyterians might far more reasonably urge these claims. For as all their ministers are bishops; as their bishops, at the reformation, were ordained by those in authority; as they can undeniably trace their succession upward through the Romish, the Waldensian, and the Culdee churches, to the very time of the apostles; and as in their time bishops were presbyters, and acted under the one and only commission given by divine appointment; it is therefore plain, that while their ministerial succession is certain and unquestionable, that of prelates never can be established.

322. *Why, then, are we not to glory in this succession?*

Because they only are true bishops of Jesus Christ, who are called of God; who receive his Spirit; and who preach his truth in its purity and its fulness; this being the all-essential mark of the church of Christ.\*

323. *What evils arise from the assertion, that this unbroken succession of prelates is essential to a true church, to a true ministry, and to all hope of covenanted mercy?*

This doctrine would destroy all existing churches, and thus, all hope of salvation; since there is no church which can establish such a succession. It also fosters pride and ambition among the clergy; lukewarmness, formality, and hypocrisy among the laity; and carnality, contention, and animosity among all protestant denominations. It strengthens popery, by conceding its essential principles and its most arrogant de-

‡See author's Lectures, lect. xiii.

†See *ibid*, lect. xv. xvii. xviii. and xix.

\*See author's Lectures, lect. xx. and xxi.

mands. And it strengthens infidelity, by implicating christianity in a doctrine which is in itself unscriptural, in its tendency hurtful, in its evidence baseless, and in its reasoning absurd.

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SECTION V.

*The advantages and claims of the presbyterian church.*

324. *What claims, then, has the presbyterian church on all her members?*

She is scriptural in her character, ordinances, and doctrines; apostolic in her forms, officers, and order of government and worship; adapted to secure the religious liberty and prosperity of all her members, and to extend the blessings of salvation to the ends of the earth.

325. *What other advantages does the presbyterian church possess, to recommend her to all her members?*

In her government there is found ample provision, according to the word of God, for the preservation of order, free from all confusion; of peace and unity, free from schism and division; of the truth as it is in Jesus, free from all error and heresy; of piety, free from all scandal and profaneness; of equity and right, free from all maladministration, whether ignorant, arbitrary, or tyrannical; of the honor and purity of Christ's ordinances, free from all contempt, pollution, and profanation; of the comfort, quickening, and encouragement of the saints in all the ways of Christ; and of the honor of God and of our Lord Jesus, in all the services of the sanctuary.

326. *Name some of the further advantages possessed by members of the presbyterian church?*

They possess the right of choosing their own pastors and elders; they are neither subject to the spiritual despotism of a priesthood, nor to anarchy and misrule; they can bring any matter,—whether it be unfaithfulness in ministers and elders, or in the other officers and members of the church, or errors in doctrine,—before the church courts, composed of an equal proportion of clergymen and of representatives of the people, chosen by themselves, for investigation and decision; and they have the privilege and power, when their rights as citizens of Zion are assailed, of appealing from one church court to another.

327. *Are not the principles of presbyterian polity, in perfect agreement with the principles of civil liberty?*

Yes; in the equality of all her members and ministers; in her love of simplicity and order; in her opposition to all unneces-

sary distinctions; in her regard to the interests and wishes of her members, as well as ministers; in the open publicity of all her doings; in that model she has given for the exercise of the principle of representation; in that shield which she has thrown around the person and character of the poorest of her members; in that energy with which her various enterprises are carried on; in a word, in her perfect unity combined with diffusiveness and universality, she exhibits all the principles and features of true liberty, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

Matt. 28: 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

328. *What is the duty of members of the presbyterian church, toward members of other christian churches?*

They should respect their religious opinions and practices; avoid all bigotry and prejudice; abstain from all officious controversy, and underhand proselytism; reciprocate all acts of christian courtesy and kind regard; and co-operate with them in the promotion of every good word and work.

329. *What, then, is the claim which the presbyterian church makes upon the regards of all her members?*

She claims to be regarded as a true and pure church, having the pure word preached, and the sacraments duly administered; and as an entire and perfect church, having that apostolic form, order, and ministry, which can be traced back to Christ and his apostles. But while her discipline is the best, she does not wish it to be regarded as the *only* form of church government that gives validity to ordinances, or hope of salvation.

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#### SECTION VI.

*Of the relation of the presbyterian church to the world.*

330. *In what relation does the church stand to the world?*

Christ has appointed his church to be the salt of the earth, that it may be preserved from premature destruction; to be the pillar and ground of the truth; and to be a missionary association, to send forth teachers, and gather all nations unto Christ.

Matt. 5: 13. 1 Tim. 3: 15. Matt. 28: 19.

331. *What is the duty of the church as the salt of the earth?*

As the earth is preserved only for the sake of the church, it is the duty of the church carefully to retain its purity, and to show a good example to all around; lest, having lost its savor, the judgments of God should come upon the world.

Mat. 24: 22; 5: 13, as above.



332. *What is the duty of the church as the ground of the truth?*

It is the duty of the church, as the ground of the truth, to preserve and circulate the scriptures, pure and entire; earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; and to adorn the doctrine of Christ by exhibiting in its members a walk and conversation becoming the gospel, that others, seeing their good works, may be led to glorify their Father who is in heaven.

2 Tim. 2: 2. Jude 3. Tit. 2: 10. Matt. 5: 16.

333. *What is the duty of the church to the world as the pillar of the truth?\**

It is the duty of the church, as the pillar of the truth, to consider herself as a missionary association, organized by Christ, for the promotion of God's glory, in the evangelization of the world.

Rom. 12: 5-8. Rev. 22: 17. Gal. 4: 18. 2 Cor. 12: 15. Acts ch. 13 and 15.

334. *What has Christ promised with regard to the future destiny of the church?*

Christ has promised, that all countries shall yet be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; and that with the ingathering of the Gentiles, the Jews shall be restored to their forfeited privileges, and made full partakers of all the blessings of the gospel.

Rom. 11: 25-27. Matt. 28: 19.

335. *What influence is the church fitted to exert upon the state of the world?*

As all misery sprung originally from sin, so is it maintained only by its continuance. And thus, when christianity shall be extended over the whole world, poverty and disease will be greatly decreased, while that which remains will be softened by the exercise of faith in God, and the sympathy of our fellow-men;—the happiness and prosperity of individuals will be increased, by the restoration of communion with God, and obtaining his blessing according to his promise, the faithful performance of the duties which men owe to each other, and promotion of truth, peace, and love among all men;—the resources of nations will be increased, and their expenditures diminished;—and the general happiness of mankind will be promoted, by the acquisition and enjoyment of health and wealth, the diffusion of industry, temperance, and morality, by providing conscientious servants, neighbors, and friends, and by establishing confidence, and diffusing intelligence, kindness,

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\*The reference is to pillars as anciently used for proclaiming to the world and to future times the knowledge of great events.

respect, meekness, and prudence, among all ranks and classes of society.

Eph. 5: 6. Isa. 32: 15-18. Rev. 3: 20. Job 36: 11. Rom. 13: 7-10. Luke 2: 14. James 2: 5. Ps. 117: 17. Prov. 15: 6. Eph. 6: 3. 1 Thess. 4: 11, 12. Matt. 5: 5, 9. Prov. 14: 34.

336. *Why, then, is it the especial and imperative duty of the presbyterian church, and of every member of it, to engage with all their powers in the great work of spreading the gospel throughout the earth?*

Since it is thus the great end and duty of the church to act as a missionary association, this also must be the great end and duty of the presbyterian church, as a branch of the catholic church; and since the purest form of christianity will be the most efficacious in imparting its blessings, it is therefore the especial duty of every member of this church, which derives all its doctrines, polity, and worship from the pure word of God, to labor earnestly for its extension to the ends of the earth.



A Sabbath School Teaching Service  
for the Whole Church,  
Instituted by  
Christ

IN SEVEN ARTICLES

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By REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

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1872



## EDITORIAL NOTE.

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The following treatise on the Sunday School was first published in October and November, 1872, in a series of seven articles in the *Earnest Worker*, then a weekly periodical published in Richmond, Virginia, and edited by Rev. Dr. E. T. Baird.

These articles are among Dr. Smyth's last published writings. They display unimpaired vigor, and unabated interest in the activities and welfare of the Church. His matured view of the true ideal of Christian life and service on the Sabbath was as follows: The whole congregation, including children, should assemble for worship at the morning preaching service; the whole congregation should assemble in the afternoon for the Sabbath School teaching service, the competent members not engaged in teaching to engage in local afternoon mission work; Sunday evenings should be devoted to the cultivation of family religion at home, the father being the family priest, and sacred songs occupying much of the time. These home gatherings should be family gatherings.

His view of the Sunday School would practically coincide with this proposition: The Sunday School is not a department of the Church, nor the nursery of the Church; it is the whole Church united in learning and teaching God's Word.

J. W. F.

## A CARD.

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To the Brethren, the Ministers, and Elders of the Presbyterian Church in the United States :—There are two subjects of immediate practical importance to all our churches, and to every Christian's business and bosom, on which I have long thought carefully, upon which I would beg leave to call your prayerful and self-introspective attention, as parting counsels from such an one as Paul the aged, believing, as I do, that their adoption, with a due regard to the circumstances of each, would greatly promote the prosperity of our Zion, and the spiritual activity, usefulness, and happiness of every Christian, while living, and when dying, and make them after death as stars to shine, and give light to them that sit in darkness, while they occupy their bright spheres in the firmament of heaven. The first subject is, "A Sabbath School Teaching Service for the whole Church, instituted by Christ;" and the second is, "The privilege and duty of every Christian making his will, and disposing of his property, whether much or little, with a due regard to the claims of Christ."

THOMAS SMYTH.

*Charleston, S. C., September, 1872.*



# A SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHING SERVICE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH, INSTI- TUTED BY CHRIST.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE INSTITUTION AND AUTHORITY OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL.

Every one will admit that, as labourers together with God, in the great field which is the world, we would work with far more enthusiastic alacrity and joy, if we felt assured that His eye was upon us in approving smile, and that we followed closely His ascertained method of procedure. If the presence of Boaz among his reapers must have been both inspiring and heartsome, how soul-animating will be the personal presence, example and counsel of the Divine Sower of the incorruptible seed, in the hearts of sinful man. The evidence of a divine institution for a Sunday School teaching service in the church, not only, as at present, for the children and youth, but also for its adult and older members, is, therefore, very desirable, if such a work is, or ought to be undertaken by our Zion.

It has ever been one glory of the Presbyterian church, that it admitted nothing into its system of doctrines, or its order of divine worship, or its training and discipline of its members, which is not by good and necessary inference drawn from the Word of God, its only recognized infallible rule of faith and practice, "unto which nothing is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men." Our church has, therefore, always been in the highest degree conservative, slow to alter, or introduce, what it has received as delivered by the fathers, and consecrated by their hallowed memories, and their blood-stained testimonies. Hence, Sunday Schools, in their modern form, have been slowly and cautiously admitted into its policy, after the severest scrutiny of their principles and practical results. A prejudice against them has been very commonly indulged, based upon the supposition that they are a modern innovation, and a form of humanly devised voluntary association, separate and independent of the church. This prejudice derived strength from the fact that such voluntary associations, under the name of Sabbath Schools, have, in latter days, been extensively formed, with ever increasing power and popularity, and that in their earlier period they were designed chiefly to supply the want of primary education among the most



ignorant classes. And although the intuitive consciousness of the church, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, has been increasingly awakened to a conviction of the great importance and benefit of Sabbath Schools, and has to that extent employed their agency in connection with its other means of instructing children in the first principles of the oracles of God, there have still existed serious doubts and difficulties as to the relation in which such schools stand to the church, and consequently, as to their rightful province and authority. This state of feeling was very fully brought to light in the extensive and able discussion of the General Assembly of our Southern Presbyterian Church, on the subject of Sabbath Schools, about three years since. It was to me a matter of as much surprise as of painful regret, to hear many brethren, whom I know and love for eminent talents and piety, express themselves as openly opposed on principle to Sabbath Schools, or languidly indifferent to them, or as being merely a supplementary or auxiliary help, to be employed with great moderation and careful inspection, one pastor even declaring that he advised his people not to send their children to Sabbath School.

Since that time, and chiefly owing to the faithful and devoted labours of our Committee of Publication, there has been a great change in the general views and feelings of the church. The Sabbath School has been adopted by every church *as its own agency*. Every session has been called upon to take oversight of their Sabbath School, and to throw into it the energies of the church. A column has been added to the ecclesiastical reports for Sabbath Schools. The *Children's Friend* has been published every fortnight as a Sabbath School paper, adapted to the wants of children and parents. The *Earnest Worker* has also been issued, and edited with growing ability and care, with a more special adaptation to pastors, superintendents, and teachers. The plan of a systematic course of teaching by a series of lessons, to be adopted by all the schools, upon the gospel of St. Matthew, has been used for the last two years. Many of our ministers also have adopted this uniform system of lessons as a basis for their weekly expository lecture, and it was even proposed, in a very able and timely report, on the Bible, in the last General Assembly, that ordinarily, when there is more than one service a day in any church, one at least be devoted to the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, and that in this reading and exposition, the people all, and more especially the children of the church, be encouraged to take with them into the pew a copy of the sacred Scriptures, thus to impress the passages read more deeply on their memories. A number of very interesting papers have appeared in the *Earnest Worker*, all tending to show that throughout our church the Spirit is leading the minds

of our brethren to feel after, if haply they might know fully, the whole mind of Christ, and the complete duty of the church in regard to this all-important subject.

One of these, from which I quote, written by a layman, is designed to urge, if not considered impracticable, the propriety of uniting the whole congregation in the Sabbath School exercises, having every individual old enough to attend to take part in them, either as scholars or teachers:

"What a beautiful spectacle it would present. The whole church of Christ assembled each Sabbath to spend an hour or two in the study of God's word; Christians who have been striving to walk in the fear of God coming to learn that way more perfectly, and bringing their children and friends with them. It seems that God would be there to enlighten them by His Spirit, and cause their hearts to burn within them while they listened to the voice of the Saviour. The afternoon might be devoted to such a school, without damage to the church resulting from the loss of the pulpit services, and the preaching could be postponed until night. In this plan the church, as an organized body, through its sessions and its pastors, and the church, as it is constituted of individual members, is called to the labour of love which promises rich blessing to all who are concerned in any way in the work. It makes the Sabbath School an institution of the church. It unites the church in one combined effort. It establishes a homogeneity of purpose, of effort, and of influence among all the people of God. It creates a sympathy for each other, and draws them nearer together in bonds which are hard to sever. It enlists the talent, the energy, and the piety of the church for Christ and His kingdom."

Another writer in the *Earnest Worker*, signed "L," expresses the same view of the Sabbath School. Says he:

"I wish the school in connection with my Church to embrace the *whole congregation*, in some capacity; and the instruction which it is designed to secure, to engage the efforts of *parents and children day by day throughout the week*. In other words, I would have the Sabbath School to be the coming together of the whole congregation, the pastor and elders—the spiritual shepherds of the flock—and the *families*—the constituent elements of the Church—for the systematic study in concert of God's holy word.

"The system of uniform Scripture lessons, now so generally used, appears to be eminently adapted to such a purpose as I have mentined, if it were only thoroughly *worked*. And the question with me has been how to work it so as to accomplish the end desired. I have a plan before my mind which I have not yet put in practice, but hope ere long to test. Meantime,

however, I would direct the thoughts of others to the same point, and invite the views and suggestions of those who have had a larger experience in the work."

A third writer, also in the *Earnest Worker*, has expressed the same views of the duty of the Church arising from the conduct of the primitive Christians of Judea, when scattered abroad by the first persecution.

These views have taken root among other denominations, in other parts of our own country and Great Britain, and have been adopted by the most eminent leaders of the Sabbath School enterprise, as, for instance, Dr. Vincent, Mr. Turnbull, &c. And there are quite a number of churches that are acting practically upon this plan. We may well believe that this concurrent centralization upon the same views of the relation of the Sabbath School to the Church, and of the duty and privilege of the church to organize them with a Sabbath School teaching service on the Lord's day *for the whole church*, proceeds not from men, but from the Holy Spirit, leading people of every denomination who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as both theirs and ours, to return to what I believe was Christ's own instituted plan of working for the church; and that which was followed in the best and purest days of apostolic and primitive Christianity; and which, in some form of essential unity, was adopted by the Reformers in their frequent expository lectures on the holy Scriptures, book by book; in their *teaching ministers or doctors*; in their catechisms and catechetical classes, which were for most part held, as in many parts of Scotland and Ireland to the present time, on the Lord's day, and in the presence of the whole congregation.

It will be remembered, also, as affording strong presumptive ground for the expectation of Divine authority for this plan, that under all the former dispensations of the church, children and youth were united with their fathers in all covenant privileges and obligations, and in all their public assemblies for learning, reading, and expounding God's word. I may therefore hope, in proceeding to develop such a divine institution for a teaching service for the whole congregation as one of the regular services of the Lord's day, that I will be enabled to show, that, by good and necessary inference, it is plainly taught by Christ Himself in His great commission, and in the exposition made of that by the first apostolic commentators.

## CHAPTER II.

### OUR LORD'S GREAT COMMISSION AND CHARTER OF THE CHURCH.

In the discussions of the Assembly of 1872, the Rev. Dr. Armstrong said that "the church in every age has its own peculiar mission. The grand characteristic of the ecclesiastical history of this age is the fact that the church has waked up to a sense of the true meaning of the command of Christ, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' we begin to realize the full extent of our duty as Christians in spreading the glad tidings of salvation throughout the world. The church of the future will be a missionary church." To this I say heartily, amen, amen, so let it be, so may it be. I would, however, supplement Dr. Armstrong's observation, by saying that the church is waking up to a sense of the true meaning of what constitutes *one-half of the command of Christ*—that is, His commission and charter of the church—"making disciples of all nations, and baptizing them, teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We begin to realize the full extent of our duty as Christians in fulfilling to the children, youth, and adult members of the church, this great commanded duty in organizing and systematically instructing them in the "all things whatsoever Christ has commanded," remembering that Christ claims in giving this commission all power in heaven and upon earth over the souls of men by His gospel, and of securing the propagation, preservation and perpetuation of His church everywhere, both among Jews and Gentiles; and that Christ promised in the exercise of that omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent power, to make the labours of His people, in faithfully carrying out every part of this divine commission, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, unto salvation, to the end of the world.

What, according to our Lord's commission, is the church? It is, in brief, Christ's authorized instrumentality for carrying on among the sinful race of men, to the end of time, His own great work of salvation, sanctification and eternal redemption. I say it is Christ's instrumentality, not Christ's substitute, or vicarious, autocratic agency. It is Christ himself still present by His own power and Spirit, operating in the hearts, and through the minds, and hands, and influence, and means, and activities of His people. What then, according to His own commission, are the functions to which this church, as it receives power from Him, is to devote its energies? To understand this, in its completeness, we must combine the commission as given in the separate records of the evangelists, Matthew



and Mark. Matthew, writing more distinctly with a reference to the Jewish mind, by whom preaching would be *implied* in organizing, discipling and teaching, dwells on these; while Mark, adapting his biography more especially to the Gentile world, who were at that time in universal, heathenish ignorance, implies all under the great function of preaching. Taking their combined scripture record together it reads thus, "And Jesus said unto them,"—that is, to the 500 brethren then constituting His visible church—"ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And He said unto them, all power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and teach" (or as the margin reads, "disciple") "all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe," &c., &c.; "and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen,"—that is it shall certainly be so. "After the Lord had thus spoken unto them, He lifted up His hands and blessed them, . . . and they worshipped Him. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

Now it is most manifest that here the functions of the church are distinctly divided into three—1st. Preaching; 2d. Discipling by baptism; 3d. Teaching the all things of Christ. The **FIRST** great function of the church, therefore, to all nations as alike guilty, is "Preach the Gospel," (KEERUXATE TO EUAGGELION PASEE TEE KTISI.) The sun of this function, on which it is not my present business to dwell, is making known as a herald or ambassador the glorious news of amnesty, pardon and eternal life from God, reconciled through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His living and dying work of meritorious, efficacious and vicarious atonement and righteousness.

To this function of the church, its attention has been almost exclusively directed, the other parts of the commission being considered as merely supplemental, or incidental, and not, *as they manifestly are, both in words and in nature*, distinct, and distinctly authoritative and essential.

*Second.* As the late Duke of Wellington said to a Lord Bishop, who was ridiculing the folly of foreign missions, "My Lord, how reads your commission, for to a military man, a clear understanding of that is the first and all-important duty." I therefore proceed to read from our Lord's own words what is

further contained in His commission, or charter of the church. According to Matthew, Christ says, "Go ye, *teaching*," or as the margin reads, "MAKING DISCIPLES of all nations BY BAPTIZING THEM," &c. As Valpy, with all the critics, says, there is here an evident distinction between this word rendered in our English text *teaching*, but in the margin, *making disciples* of, and the word rendered teaching in the next verse. There are five Greek words, which our English version has in one or more places translated teach, DIDASKO, KATAGGELLO, MATHEETEUO, KATEECHEO, and PAIDEUO. Of these, the most proper and constant is the word DIDASKO, which is used in one form or other hundreds of times in the New Testament. In regard to the other terms which are very rarely rendered *by teach*, their meaning must be regarded only as secondary and figurative. As Dr. Campbell, sustained by Bloomfield (*Crit. Digest*), and recent critics, justly observe, there are three things here enjoined: I. To convert to the faith. II. To initiate by baptism. III. To instruct those so organized in all the practical duties of a Christian life, as made known in Christ's all things commanded. The term here translated *teach*, is, as Bloomfield says, "clearly important and emphatic, and signifies to make a disciple of," or in other words, to initiate into an organized church, or school, under Christ, the great Teacher, or Master, the persons of all nations. This is the meaning entertained by a host of the ablest critics, and by the Syriac version, which is, *make disciples*. This use of the word *disciple* was formerly common in our language, and found in Shakespeare and Spencer. The word occurs only four times in the New Testament, and always in this sense, "to make a disciple of." The term *disciple* is the standard word in the New Testament for *Christian*, being used two hundred and fifty times. In conformity with this, the name every where given to Christ, and used numberless times, is Master (DIDASKALOS) Teacher. The term MATHEETES, or *disciple* is applied, not only to those already learned, but to those who are learning, or in course of instruction. These comprehended persons of every age, and were called *baptized children*, NEPIOBAPTISTAI. This is in accordance with Hebrew and classical usage, among whom it was common for parents and guardians to commit, or entrust, children to certain teachers, or to bring them to school, or put them to trades, or professions, where such children *were called disciples*. Timothy was a *disciple* from childhood, Justin Martyr, and Origen both illustrate this as a fact in the Christian policy. Among the Jews, children *as infants* were circumcised and brought into covenant, and all those who were the children of Gentile proselytes were *not only themselves called disciples but were baptized*. The Christian rule, therefore, as laid down

by the apostle, is that children should be made disciples of, and brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

The meaning therefore of this branch of Christ's commission, is precisely this: "After sinners shall have been converted by the preaching of the Gospel they shall be organized into convenient *schools*, that is churches, assemblies or associations as *pupils*, learners, disciples, under Christ the great teacher, to be instructed in His commanded "all things."

The words of Mark, "*Whosoever believeth,*" correspond with, and are included under the term employed by Matthew, *make disciples of* all those who embrace the Christian doctrine, and engage by baptism to obey all things which Christ has commanded. It will be noticed here that all who thus believe are to be enrolled or matriculated as disciples or learners in Christ's school.

We are thus brought to the THIRD great function of the church, which is, on Christ's own day, systematically, to instruct those thus initiated into its several churches as disciples, or learners, in the "all things" whatsoever Christ has commanded. Here Christ speaks personally as the DIDASKALOS, the great teacher, master and head of His school, *using this word by which He had been constantly addressed*, and thus organizing His own Church, after the model of His own school, in which He daily instructed His disciples, opening their minds to understand the scriptures, and beginning at Moses, teaching them all things concerning him, taught in the prophets and in the Psalms. In addition to these "all things" contained in the Old Testament scripture, Christ promised that He would send upon His apostles the Holy Spirit, by whom all things whatsoever He had taught them should be brought to their remembrance; and thus giving us His gospel biographies, which holy men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that what they could not hear from Him, while He was with them, the Holy Spirit should move them to write for the completion of the *all scripture* as given by Him, and which is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that His believing disciples might be perfectly instructed, and made wise unto salvation; and this we have in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation. Hence in *the Bible* we have contained "*the all things*" *whatsoever Christ has commanded*. The Bible, therefore, is the *text book* in which all who become, by believing faith and repentance, disciples of Christ and members in His particular Church or School shall be systematically and mutually instructed.

## CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S COMMISSION, AS EXPOUNDED AND CARRIED INTO PRACTICE BY HIS APOSTLES.

In the second chapter of Acts, we have an account of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples, and its wonderful results on the day of Pentecost. When the great multitude who assembled at that feast from various countries, speaking various languages, heard every man in his own tongue the apostles speak, they were so astonished, that many were ready to say these men are drunken. The Apostle Peter, however, as the voice of the whole, vindicated the disciples against such a charge, and declared that all they saw and heard was but the fulfilment of distinct prophecy, (see v. 15-21,) and continued, in his most memorable recorded sermon, to show that all the prophecies, and promises and covenants of God had been realized in the life and death and resurrection of Christ as the Saviour of all men. And when they were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the *promise* is unto you and your children, and to those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Let us notice here a glorious exemplification of Christ's promise, power and spirit in the believing fulfilment of His commission: 1st. We have here the preaching of the gospel, with its call to repentance, and the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah; and to a solemn profession of belief in His doctrine, and devotion to Him and His service. 2d. We have here baptizing and organizing into a visible church or school of Christ, with a view to fuller and continued instruction in the "all things" which Christ commanded. 3d. We have a succinct account of the first order and worship of Christ's churches, see v. 41. We there are told that all who are thus disciplined, that is, brought into a school or church capacity under Christ, the Great Teacher, or DIDASKALOS, were in the regular or constant practice of meeting together, receiving and imparting mutual instruction in the inspired doctrines of the apostles, and in commemorating the Lord's supper, and making spiritual sacrifices of their property for the common benefit of the whole Church.

The apostle also makes known that the *promise*, (the ΕΠΑΓΕΛΙΑ,) is ours, and shall belong to all believers to the end of time. It is important, therefore, to understand clearly all that is implied in this great privilege and blessing. The word promise, is identified with the term covenant, when we are told of the "covenant of promise," since God's promises are all covenants, and all God's covenants are promises; and while it



is true that the promise contained in Joel refers especially to the fact that the Christian dispensation would be eminently the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, this promise itself is called, in Ephesians i. 13, the Holy Spirit of promise. In Acts iii. 25, the same apostle, Peter, in a subsequent discourse, makes known that we are the children of the prophets and of the covenants which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and "in thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed," thus identifying the promise with the covenant. This promise is, by the Apostle Paul, also identified with the covenant made to Abraham, at length, in his epistle to the Galatians. The use of this word, *promise*, or *EPAGGELIA*, in the New Testament, is unquestionably in reference to the original promise or covenant made with Adam, and with all the patriarchs, and all the prophets which receives its full and final fulfilment in the incarnation and work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the establishment of His Church and kingdom in the earth. It is called by David, "the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, which is our salvation, and all our desires." Under this covenant or promise, the church or kingdom of God was more fully organized and developed in its true character of universality and spirituality under Abraham, in whose seed, that is, Christ, all that was prefigured and typified through Him was gloriously accomplished.

Looking back then to the nature of the church universal, as developed under Abraham, we find: 1st. The gospel preached, as we are distinctly informed it was, to Abraham, and through him, to all who became members of the church. 2d. We find the church thus gathered by the preaching of the gospel "before unto Abraham" was organized, and disciplined by the initiating sign and seal of a believing reception and profession of faith in the gospel, as embodied in the person and work of the coming Messiah. 3d. We find both parents and children united together under Abraham, the patriarchal teacher and type of the great *DIDASKALOS* or Teacher to come. All who became proselytes by faith were so disciplined. 4th. We find the "all things" of Christ, as then made known, and through previous dispensations, diligently taught by Abraham, who is commended by God for his faithfulness in discharging this duty, by taking the oversight of Christ's school, and commanding, that is, seeing all needful instructions imparted; not only to his natural, but also to his spiritual seed.

That under the Old Testament economy, it was the inevitable custom to assemble the children and youth in all seasons of public instruction, is made evident by Joel, in the passage referred to by Peter, in this same discourse, when the prophet, in his description of the gospel times and church, says, in chap.

ii. 15, "Blow ye the silver trumpet in Zion," the appointed way of convening assemblies, "sanctify a fast," gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, *gather the children, and those that suck the breast*. Let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar. And it shall come to pass, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and your old men dream dreams; your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days I will pour out My spirit." It is thus made certain, that in accordance with all preceding prophecies, the Christian church as we have seen it, is by Christ's commission required to be His instrumentality. 1st. In making known His glorious gospel to every creature. 2d. By organizing converts into convenient schools or churches by the sacramental seal of the initiation into Christ's visible church, and the visible profession of faith in, and obedience, to Him. 3d. By arranging so that all persons so converted to the faith, whether they become ministers, or elders, or deacons, or Christ's disciples, are associated together as *pupils or learners*, to be taught by God the Holy Ghost in Christ's school. 4th. It is equally evident, that this school must include all, whether they be old men, old women, young men, or young maidens; children or youth, and infants also; so far as the solemn act of sacramental initiation is concerned, and union with the visible church as disciples is formed, even children upon the breast, all are to be made disciples of, all to be considered as pupils or learners in Christ's school, and all are to be, as they become capable, taught all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. It is evident, lastly, that in receiving this mutual instruction in these "all things," all these disciples are to be assembled together as a solemn act of worship at the customary time of God's appointed worship, and on the Lord's day. In further proof of this, I would only refer again to the v. 41 of this chapter, where we find a delineation of the first order and worship of Christian churches. "And all those who had been made by baptism disciples of, continued steadfastly together, and more especially on the Lord's day, in preaching, communing, in mutual instruction, in prayer, and in the liberal communication of their worldly means for the benefit of their common cause. In illustration of what has been thus proved, I will, in conclusion, refer to the case of the Berean disciples, who are so commended in the subsequent records of apostolic labour for thus assembling themselves together for the purpose of mutual instruction and examination of the scriptures concerning the things preached unto them by the apostles, whether these things were so.

## CHAPTER IV.

A SABBATH SCHOOL, TEACHING SERVICE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH, THEREFORE,  
INSTITUTED BY CHRIST.

It will now I think be advisable to make a resume, in distinct form, of the certainty of the facts which we have ascertained, not on the ground of conjecture or probability, but by plain and necessary deduction from the terms employed by Christ and His inspired apostles in stating to us His great commission and charter of the Church, and His divine authoritative appointment of what that commission requires.

I. We have the preaching of the Gospel as the standing ordinance which, by the demonstration and especial working of the Holy Spirit, is made the power of God, and wisdom of God to the salvation of impenitent, unbelieving, and guilty sinners. To enable the church to carry on this function most successfully, Christ, as the Lord of the Sabbath, which was made by Him for man, and not man for the Sabbath, and which He has appropriated since His resurrection from the dead as the Lord's day, has set apart one entire day in the seven, for rest from all worldly employments, and exclusive devotion to all spiritual interest. To make this both possible and pleasant, Christ has adapted all the laws of man's nature, and of the world which he inhabits, so that all earthly happiness shall be promoted by the holy consecration of the Sabbath; and that, instead of interfering with man's worldly prosperity and all reasonable enjoyment, these will be immeasurably enhanced. Christ has thus, as the Lord of nature and of man, given to His Church *its working day*, the most common and familiar names of which are Sabbath and Sunday. Attaching to those epithets whatever work or service the church engages in during that day, it is properly called Sunday or Sabbath work.

II. This preaching is self-evidently but a third portion of what Christ has instituted, and made the privilege and obligation of His Church, to carry on. I have shown, beyond all possible cavil, that the Church is just as solemnly bound, practically, to obey the two remaining functions to which it is called. Christ calls upon the Church to recognize Him, not only as a Prince, a Saviour, and a Priest, but as the great DIDASKALOS or Teacher, or Prophet. He has Himself selected this term DIDASKALOS, the distinctly proper word to express the idea teacher or instructor, and assumed it as His own constant and familiar title, while here upon earth among His disciples, and as still His self-chosen and recorded name by which He would have His Church recognize Him to the end of the world. And

that no caviling criticism may abridge the full significance of this title, we have it defined, Rom. ii. 20, as "the teacher of babes," ΝΕΕΠΙΟΟΜ. Christ has also, by the exercise of the same divine authority and wisdom, selected as the most common and familiar name for those who believe upon Him with the heart and confess Him with the mouth, the corresponding name of (ΜΑΤΗΕΤΟΙ,) disciples, pupils, learners, those who are in the course of receiving instruction. Thus we have the great Teacher or Superintendent, and the scholars, and we have also the school, for the Church is under imperative obligation to associate or organize the scholars into convenient schools, under Christ as their great Teacher. And for this purpose Christ has provided a solemn badge of initiation or matriculation, which is baptism. Every church is, therefore, by its own nature, and by the terms of its charter and commission, a school of Christ. It is the glory of the Church that it is Christ's established school for eternity, in which His lost and ignorant children shall be made wise unto salvation, and after graduation in this school, attain unto the perfection of manhood in that higher life, and its more glorious nature and consummated activities of the soul.

III. We have thus seen that Christ makes known to the Church the Sabbath as its working day; Himself as the great ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΟΣ or Teacher; every professing believer as a scholar or learner under Him, and every church as an organized school of Christ, to fit and prepare men for the higher life and work of the eternal ages. Hence we have, as divinely instituted by Christ, a Sabbath School, composed not of a portion, but of all His professedly believing people; not of the children merely; not of youth, male or female, merely; not, merely, of those who choose voluntarily to connect themselves with it, or to remain in it; not of those, merely, who may, by reason of gifts, or talents, or graces, take more especial interest or delight in it; not to those merely, who may be most earnest, emulous, and spiritually ambitious; but of all and every one, who by the preaching of the Gospel, and the spirit making that preaching effectual to hopeful salvation and professing of Christ's name and service, have been initiated as scholars or learners. Do we not then have, as instituted by Christ Himself, in His own commission of His Church, in every particular congregation, an organized Sunday or Sabbath School of Christ, united together by solemn bonds of profession, for the purpose of receiving instruction from Him, and through those who have been called and selected as His co-labourers together with Him?

IV. This leads us to notice the provision made for authorized subordinate teachers, in these schools of Christ. All who are called by the preaching of the gospel, and thus selected or



chosen by Christ out of the world, endowed by Him with their several natural and acquired capacities and gifts; whether of knowledge, or wisdom, or experience, or utterance, or persuasive influence; all are given by Him to the Church; united together as one body, with its many members or organs, all differing in gifts, talents, and fitness for receiving or imparting instruction. Christ, therefore, leaves His people, in the exercise of a wise discrimination, to arrange the elements He has gathered together, according to their several characteristics. All are to be arranged, for convenience and edification, into classes; under suitable teachers, superintendents and pastors. This is in accordance with the teaching of our standards and the invariable order of our churches, that in all things, not of the essence of doctrine, Christian wisdom and expediency should arrange the circumstances connected with the worship and service of God. Thus then we have the divinely instituted Sabbath or Sunday School service for all the members of the Church, and provision made by Christ for the continual supply as needed of teachers and scholars.

V. It only remains, in this section, to show that Christ has also thoroughly furnished His Church for the perfect discharge of all these duties, by providing a *text book*, for the use of His school, and for that teaching service which He had instituted for the whole congregation, as one of the most important exercises of His own Sabbath day. And that we find in the Holy Scriptures, which we have before shown to be "the all things whatsoever He has commanded," including the Old Testament scriptures, written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the New Testament Scriptures, which He has, since His ascension, commanded to be written by His holy evangelists and apostles as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to complete and shut up the canon of inspired truth, and "of the all things," therefore, which Christ has commanded. This is the *Text Book* for the Church's school, under Christ as the great DIDASKALOS, accompanied by the Holy Spirit as His divine power and wisdom for making them effectual to salvation to every one that believes. Hence it is a chief and essential function in every church, not only to have a *preaching* service for the whole congregation on every Lord's day, as a solemn Sunday or Sabbath day service, but also to have a *teaching* service for the whole congregation, in which the Bible shall be systematically and catechetically taught. The word here employed by Christ in His commission, as we have seen, is teach or instruct, as a teacher or master of a school instructs his scholars. The force of these words can neither be evaded or evaporated. The terms are distinct, definite, and of constant use. Preaching is not in the strict sense of these words

teaching, nor is teaching, preaching. Preaching is generally miscellaneous, in the sight of every man's conscience, convincing, persuading him to be reconciled to God in Christ. It is impossible, for various reasons, which will readily suggest themselves, that in the nature of things and of the intended effect of preaching, that it can be made to impart regular, consecutive, systematic instruction in the whole Bible. Such a thing the pulpit never has attempted, and never can. The teaching here demanded is to be given, as in a school, by teachers or masters, to scholars in detail, systematically, and so as to comprehend in its full course the spirit and substance of the "all things which Christ has commanded in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament." May I not then say that Christ has authoritatively and explicitly instituted, in His own divine charter and commission, a Sunday or Sabbath School teaching exercise for all the members, including the pastor, elders, deacons, old and young, of every particular church. Has he not made distinct provision for such a school, for its organization, its badge of profession and initiation, for its subordinate teachers, for its classification, according to the permitted exercise of a wise Christian expediency, for its text book, and for its method and course of instruction? In every congregation let all who may be deemed suitable and qualified be selected as teachers. Let these be aided by the church with all the suitable appliances for the work; for their mutual and private preparation; for teaching some selected portion of a systematic Bible course of instruction. Let her children, youth, and more matured members be divided under these teachers, into Bible and other classes, not forgetting infants. Let all the other members who may not feel qualified to teach, or who would prefer, constitute a class gathered around the pastor to receive from him general instruction on the same selected lesson, not requiring, as necessary, distinct preparation on their part, beyond voluntary questions and answers. Let the pastor call all the congregation together some minutes before concluding this teaching exercise and service of public worship, and close the whole by suitable remarks, singing and prayer. This I believe, and will further show to be Christ's instituted Sabbath teaching exercise.

## CHAPTER V.

A SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHING SERVICE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH, AS INSTITUTED BY CHRIST, CONFORMED TO THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF CHRIST.

Among the Institutions of Christ, we may enunciate the family, church, ministry, Bible, Sabbath, and State. Now, it may be laid down as an axiom, and as a test, that any one institution of Christ will be adapted to every other, and this very test has been the chief ground of objections to Sabbath Schools, considered, as they have hitherto been, of human origin, voluntary associations, and independent. Let us, then, test the certainty of our conclusions, in making a Sabbath School teaching service for the whole church an institution of Christ: 1st, as regards the family. This is unquestionably Christ's primary school, whose final end, and most important function, is to train up children as a holy seed, and fit and prepare them for a wise and mature manhood here and hereafter. The family with a Christian husband at its head, and a Christian mother as its life, light, love, and joy, is the nursery, both of a prosperous church and a happy nation; and within its own sphere, authority, instruction, and discipline, a family is the chiefest instrumentality for training up children in the way they should go. It is, at the same time, self-evident, that Christ has not made the family autocratic or independent of his other institutions. On the contrary, he has revealed the laws of the family in the Bible. He has also made it the duty of the family to be a component part in all its members, young and old, male and female, of his church; dependent upon ministerial offices, and pastoral oversight, and the church's wise, paternal discipline. In the Church, the family finds also its spiritual food provided for it, upon which its life, health, and happiness depend. It finds in the church a divine homestead, a father's house, where all his separate kindred receive a cordial welcome, spiritual instruction, and a royal feast of spiritual good things, adapted equally to the tastes of children and parents. In the Church, the hearts of parents are turned, under the most solemn sense of responsibility, and of needful wisdom and grace, to their children. In the preaching service of the Sabbath, parents are stimulated, directed, and encouraged; while the little ones hear the children's gospel, and are led by the hands of love and faith to that good Shepherd, who stands with open arms ready to receive them, and to make them wise unto salvation.

2. In the teaching service of the church, all its families are again gathered together, to receive mutually needed instruction from the same divine DIDASKALOS, in a manner more familiar,

free, and systematic; milk for the babes, and strong meat for those who are grown. Children find their parents studying, with them, the same lesson, regarding it with the same reverence and binding obligation, and as being just as important for them as for the youngest members of the family. Parents and children go home from this service to occupy their minds during the week with another selected lesson from God's word, to make themselves acquainted with it, by availing themselves of the helps provided, the parents taking an interest in the studies of their children, and the children encouraged to make enquiries of their parents. By such a course, regularly pursued, how evident it is that our families will become Bible schools, and their members, both parents and children, Bible scholars, and gradually proficient in Bible knowledge, and having topics of interesting and edifying conversation to supply the place of that idle talking, and evil speaking, which otherwise to so great extent fills up the hours of household leisure.

According to this plan, it is evident that the Sabbath School teaching service, in place of being separate, distinct, or independent from the Church, is a chief part of its intended instrumentality for carrying out its great purpose. Its wisdom and authority are called into exercise, in all Christian activity, to arrange, adapt and make as edifying and as beneficial as possible, all its instructions; to supply with variety that may not satiate, originality that will attract, and fresh, various, illustrations that will interest, with all prayer, unction and zeal, that will bring down the Saviour's promised blessing and spirit, like the dew, and the early and latter rain.

3d. Not less congenial is this service with Christ's regard to the ministry as of supreme importance and sacred dignity, as His first and chiefest gift to His Church, while upon earth, when ascending to heaven, and when exalted to the right hand of God. The pastor still retains his position and plenary authority in the Church, and in connection with the ruling elders, the representatives of the people, and the deacons, to whom is entrusted distribution, or the third part of the government of the Church:—exercises all oversight, control and auxiliary help;—and in union with the teachers and superintendents, who have been selected by these officers, all matters pertaining to the interest, progress and prosperity of the school are administered.

4th. By this instituted service of teaching, the all things of Christ contained in the inspired Scripture, the Bible is enthroned in the seat of power, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice,—the eternal fountain of sacred truth, and the ever-living, and ever-flowing streams of joy and salvation to make glad the city of our God. By this service the Bible is made so practical and familiar in its study and application that



the youngest may be made wise unto salvation; the youth and middle-aged, clothed with the whole panoply of God so as to fight manfully, and contend earnestly for *the faith* once delivered to the saints,—and the oldest members have their knowledge renewed, and their courage revived, and their spiritual health made strong in the Lord, and their souls inspired with a song of triumph over their last dread foe.

5th. It will be self-evident that this service is not only in perfect harmony with Christ's institution of the State as an ordinance to which all Christian men are to be subject in the Lord—that is, in all things which are not contrary to Christ's supreme and paramount authority. As families make up communities, and give to them their power and character, and as communities in like manner make up the State, and constitute its wisdom and strength, this teaching service, being the divinely instituted means for the best development of all Christian, moralizing and civilizing influences, must be equally so in regard to the State, which is only a more widely extended family. Righteousness is the only sure and permanent exaltation of any State, and that people alone can be truly happy whose God is the Lord. It is equally true that the Bible is the only eternal fountain whence these purifying and gladdening waters can be drawn; a Sabbath School teaching service, in which all the population of the State shall be systematically taught in these Scriptures, must be of supremest importance.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ADVANTAGES AND ADAPTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S TEACHING SERVICE.

It only remains, in concluding this exposition of Christ's commission of the Church, and an institution therein of a Sabbath School Teaching Service, for the whole Church, to glance at some of the manifold adaptations and advantages which will be found to flow from it experimentally. I. I would notice the provision which it makes for weak churches, which can only be provided with preaching once a fortnight, or perhaps once a month, or which may be for a time, by reason of death or removal, without a pastor. Let any of our churches, however feeble, be organized on Christ's plan, so that every one connected with them shall feel that they are united as a School of Christ, and every one labourers together with him in His vineyard, and thus bound together, not merely that they may hear preaching from his ordained ministers, but also to be taught systematically, and taught mutually, the "all things" contained in His Holy Word; and what shall hinder them from assembling every Sabbath to take up that special lesson, provided by the Church, and spend a very profitable season on the Lord's Day in receiving and imparting mutual instruction, connected with exercises of singing and of prayer, under the direction, and with the co-operation, of the elders and deacons of the Church. I can conceive of no more profitable and edifying service. What could possibly draw out, to as large an extent, the feelings of mutual responsibility, love and devotion to their church? What could more effectually bind them together with cords of affection, sympathy and hope? What could encourage them more zealously to persevere to the end? What could be more adapted to draw out talent and dormant faculties of usefulness? What could more certainly bring down upon their labours the blessing of the Good Husbandman?

II. In the second place, this plan would provide for churches in the country at which the attendance must come from greater or less distances. The Sabbath ministration might be introduced by a preaching service, and then followed, after an intermission, according to the length of the day, by this teaching service, which would combine interest and profit for all present.

III. This plan would provide against what has been found destructive to the continuance and systematic teaching of our Sabbath Schools—that is, the closing of Sabbath Schools in country churches during the winter; for upon the above plan, it will be as convenient to make arrangements for this service,

as for an introductory teaching service, whenever the weather makes it practicable for either.

IV. Another great practical difficulty, hitherto insoluble, and very serious and fatal in its consequences, is the tendency of senior scholars becoming, through pride of age, ashamed or unwilling to be any longer identified with a Sunday School, considered as now it is, intended for children of younger growth. Now, all the various ineffectual plans for meeting this difficulty would at once and forever be met by Christ's own instituted method of combining in His Sunday School all classes, and all ages, all periods of life, as a vitally important service of His Church; thus proving its adaptation to all the feelings and wants of human nature.

V. No possible method of instruction could be employed by the Church so efficient as this for the prevention of error. This is apparent from the results of Sabbath School instruction in the past and present experience of the Church. It will rarely be found that the children of a well-instructed Sabbath School are led away by every wind of doctrine, by foolish questions, by partial representations of the truth, or by misquotations from the Scripture.

VI. And as this divinely instituted service would preserve the Church from error, so it would restore the Church when errors had spread within her bounds. It would reprove, rebuke, and correct them. In the light of Scripture so elevated, a bright light would be cast upon every devious path of error. Being put into the hands of every scholar, it would be a lamp to direct their steps, make wise the simple, keep back from presumptuous errors, and cleanse from secret doubts. Being made practically supreme and infallible, the Bible, like Ithuriel's spear, would unmask every plausible theory, and every false philosophy, and every word of impure tendency. To the law and the testimony would be the constant appeal, and truth and falsehood be determined by accordance or discordance therewith. Such systematic study of the whole Bible would not long coexist with error, which would assuredly disappear like mist and fogs before the clear shining of the day.

VII. Do we not also see, in the want of this service, one cause of the failure of the Church to realize all her intended benefits? Preaching, however faithful and powerful, is transient in its effects, and partial in its instruction. By its continued awakening of spiritual sensibility, without corresponding activity in mutual labours of love, it deadens that sensibility, until the sense of responsibility to acts of love and charity become callous.

Preaching requires this, and its inseparable activities, and mutual fellowship, to bring it home to every heart; to prevent

it from becoming more and more discursive, superficial, and sensational, and to render it truly biblical, instructive, and powerful to salvation. We have too much preaching and too little teaching, and too little experimental, and practical, and evangelistic working.

VIII. Another great imperfection of our churches is want of coherence and compact unity. The preaching services supply, to a delightful extent, social spiritual fellowship, and heavenly communion, and commingled joys, and of praise and prayer, and other church associations. But still they leave the Church too much like so many scattered particles of water or quicksilver, which, by this service, would be run together, so as to increase, in manifold ways—direct and indirect, immediate and ultimate—their compactness, power, and efficiency. Would not this intensify and concentrate the light and warmth of spiritual affections, zeal and prayer, and thus quicken all efforts to secure times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and by personal influence, to bring souls to Christ?

In every way, therefore, does this teaching service for every member of the Church and congregation—uniting pastor, elders, deacons, families and individuals, parents and children, young and old—commend itself as the wisdom and the power of God. It is Christ's own institution. It is Christ's Sunday School. It is Christ's method of working His own Church. It is His appointment, as the Lord of the Sabbath, as a means of grace, a part of divine worship, and one of the most important services of the sanctuary. It is Christ's ordinance, who is the author of the Bible, the founder of the family, the living head and legislator of His blood-bought Church, the munificent endower of the ministry, and the King of nations. Here he presides, as the great prophet and teacher—the Didaskolos—among His sacramentally matriculated scholars; as the Good Shepherd folding and feeding His sheep, leading them by the green pastures and still waters, restoring their souls, and teaching them, here a little and there a little, the "all things" that He has commanded. We have here both a preventive and a remedy for error, and the love-inspiring fountain of pure, undefiled, and eternal truth. For want of this very Christ-ordained means of indoctrinating the minds of the young with truth, and imbuing them with a taste and relish for the strong meat of sound doctrine, we find, even among elders and church members, an utter distaste for it, and a loss of capacity to read and enjoy any solid Christian instruction. Such books are not sought for, nor read; nor are such articles read in our magazines and papers. It is sad and sickening to see, not only our sons and daughters, but our fathers and mothers, growing more and more effeminate and superficial, feeding upon the swinish



husks of fictitious reading, and becoming more and more indifferent to, and ignorant of, substantial truth. And the evil is growing, and the degeneracy of starved, impoverished intellects increasing from generation to generation.

The remedy and restoration is to be found in Christ's teaching service for every member of the Church. This, and this alone, can impart knowledge, excite enquiry, bring Bible truth into every family every day, and make it a matter of growing interest to parents and children, and gradually foster a capacity and taste for religious and scriptural studies, and for religious reading and conversation. Let the Church and its pastors but do Christ's will in this matter, and they will know that this service is of God by a growing and blessed experience of reformation and revival.

## CHAPTER VII.

THIS SERVICE WILL NOT BE AN EXPERIMENT, BUT THE DIVINELY ORDAINED NURSERY OF THE CHURCH.

I might here, and would close this discussion, but for two recent articles in the *Earnest Worker*, suggestive of objections.

The Rev. Dr. Gregory, in a very able and eloquent paper, endeavored to prove that "the Sunday School is not an experiment still on trial, which might ultimately fail, and be replaced by some other agency, but a permanent institution of the Christian world, subject to growth, change and improvement, but which can never be abrogated till its work is done." He says:

"Is it not needful to settle this question here, and now? We cannot take our stand firmly, and plan wisely, till it is settled whether we are trying an experiment, or building on permanent foundations for the ages to come. As long as it remains unsettled, we shall continue to hear from disappointed and discouraged souls the doleful cry, 'The Sunday School interest is dying out;' 'The Sunday School has had its day;' 'The Sunday School is a failure.' *And till it is received as a settled truth that the Sunday School is a permanent and necessary institution, as necessary and permanent as the church itself, we shall never bring to its aid and advancement all the talent and energy of our best and strongest men.* There are to-day, still, not a few clergymen of high character, and of immense strength, who lend to the Sunday School only a passing pat on the head, as they might to some smart child, whom they wished half to encourage, and half to restrain. They evidently regard it as, at best, only a happy device to furnish something for their younger church members to do, *and do not suspect it may be one of God's pre appointed and permanent agencies, born in the fulness of time, and destined to live on and labour on till the end of time.* When this latter view shall break upon them with all its splendour of might and meaning, then we may expect them to bring the wealth of their great learning, and the energies of their best talent, to the work of aiding, improving, and unfolding, to its highest stretch of power, this great Christian institution. And will not all the workers now engaged—teachers, writers, editors, and publishers, take higher ground, and fall into the line of a grander movement, when the vistas of the coming ages of their work burst upon their sight?"

Dr. G. then takes up and well replies to two objections, the first founded on the recent introduction of Sunday Schools. "This," he shows, "was the case with the Christian Church itself. And the same condition of things which enveloped the

Church in ages of darkness, when children were untaught, and common schools, if existing, would have found neither text book nor teachers, and when their religious education was of course still more neglected, the same reformation and revival which led to common school education in the State, necessitated it also in the Church."

The truth is, that Christ's great commission of the Church was so overlaid and made void by the traditions of the Fathers, that the veil is even yet but partially removed. But the institution of the Sunday School as a prominent part of the Church's Lord's-day service and worship, is, as we have seen, just as explicitly commanded by Christ in His commission, as preaching, praising, or communing. It is a permanent instrumentality, and an essential function of the Church, as Dr. Gregory and so many others have felt that it must be.

This being so, the other objection noticed by Dr. Gregory is easily met—"Will not the ignorance, the fickleness, and the unwisdom of many of their friends and teachers, finally ruin the Sunday Schools, and compel their abandonment?" I answer, no more than the same causes will lead to the abandonment of preaching and the administration of sacraments, and the other parts of the Church's divinely ordained functions. All are left, in their circumstantial order and economy, to the wise expediency of Christian men, under the assured promise that Christ will be with them, by His word and Holy Spirit, interpreting that word and approving, or reproving, restraining, reforming, and reviving, preserving from serious error, and guiding into all necessary truth.

"The immense and ever varying efforts now making to systematize the Sunday School work, to put it on higher ground, to provide it better tools, and to inspire it with truer aims, are all so many answers to the objection before us. It is not a miserable, forlorn hope that is now moving to the front in this Sunday School work; it is the mustering of a grand army. Brain power, money power, the press, the platform, the pulpit—all are wheeling into line. It is victory, not defeat, that broods in the air. Hitherto we have only skirmished; the grand battle—the mighty campaign, rather—is all to come."

Neither is the Sabbath School *the Children's Church*, or a *Church for Children*. This is one of the experimental errors to which zeal for God, without a perfect knowledge of this divinely instituted teaching service for the whole Church has led. God never, in any of His ordained economies, sanctioned the separation of parents and children. On the contrary, in the family, the State, and the Church, He has inseparably conjoined them. And just as any attempt to separate the sexes, or to remove children from their parents, or to break up families

in communal association, has led to the most demoralizing results, so would it be, in any separation of children into distinct Church services. It would produce manifold disorders, and prove itself a perversion of nature, and an invasion of God's wise, and gracious economy. The gospel can never be so happily preached as in the presence of their parents, nor to parents as when surrounded by their children. Nor can the Sabbath School ever attain the efficiency and perfection God designed until it also is organized upon God's model and conducted according to His plan, with parents and children present, and mutually receiving and imparting instruction.

This teaching Sunday School service will be found the *nursery of the Church*. This has been recently denied by "an earnest, firm, and steadfast supporter of the Sunday School cause." (See *Earnest Worker*, September 12, 1872.) He says:

"As commonly used in this expression, the definite article not only distinguishes the Sunday School organization from the Church, but from any and all other agencies used for training the youth in religion. So far, very well. But it has the effect of exalting the Sunday School organization above the parental training, as a means of converting and educating young souls. \* \* \* \* The family is a distinct, well-defined organization, having all the necessary marks of a *divine institution*. *Not so with the Sunday School organization*. It is a good thing, when viewed as a means employed by church officers and members, of training children, and making conquests from "the regions beyond;" *but in no proper sense is it a divine institution at all*. It is a valuable means—one worthy of encouragement by all Christians, ministers and Church Courts. We deduce the propriety or warrant for it from the nature, work, and end of the Church. But the family is an institution appointed of God, where the children of the Church are to be taught of faithful parents."

The objection, being based on the erroneous assumption that the family school *is*, and that the Sunday School teaching service of the Church *is not*, a divine institution, therefore, fails with the established proof of the divine institution. Both are divinely instituted co-ordinate schools or nurseries. But the family is *for* the church, and not the church *for* the family. The family is *a* school, and *a* nursery, but the church is *the* school and nursery. The family is the birth-place of *persons*, but the church is the birth-place of *souls*, for "of her it shall be said that this, and that man were born in her." The family, as school and nursery, is different and distinct from the church; but the school and nursery of the church must be identified with it. Is a nursery an enclosed and carefully protected, and provisioned garden for the culture of plants? this the church is.



Is a nursery a place where the children of the family are instructed and disciplined for God, that place is the church. The nursery of the church must be within, and not apart from the church, nor subject to different legislation or authority—nor even to neutral or hostile control. The nursery of the church must be Christ's own spiritual home and sanctuary, where He abides, and of which He is the teacher, the teacher of its teachers, the framer of its laws, and the inspirer of its text-book; where He abides in love and gentleness, such as tender parents feel; where Christ feeds with His flock, feeds His lambs, and feeds all together; where He guides by His eye, and counsels by His wisdom, the elder children, while imparting instruction to the younger, imbuing their minds with the principles of His holy word. And all this Christ does in this teaching service, instituted for His own church, on His own day, as His own Sunday School, for the nurture and admonition of His own dear children, and as the *nursery* of His Church,—not its sleeping apartment, but the place for all mutual, spiritual improvement and growth in grace.





THE  
NATURE AND CLAIMS  
  
OF  
  
YOUNG MEN'S  
Christian Associations

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

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"THE GLORY OF YOUNG MEN IS THEIR STRENGTH."—PROV. **xx.** 29.

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WITH HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS FOR THEIR PAST  
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PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS

TO THE

Young Men's Christian Associations

IN THE UNITED STATES  
AND THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTIAN WORLD  
AND PERSONALLY TO MY GREATLY ESTEEMED FRIEND

ROBERT C. GILCHRIST

U. S. C.

AND

President of the Young Men's Christian Association  
OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

How precious a thing is youthful energy, if only it could be preserved entirely *englobed*, as it were, within the bosom of the young adventurer, till he can come and offer it forth a sacred emanation on yonder temple of truth and virtue. But, alas! all along as he goes towards it he advances through an avenue formed by a long line of tempters and demons on each side, all prompt to touch him with their conductors and draw the divine electric element, with which he is charged, away. JOHN FOSTER.

The *way* of every man is declarative of the *end* of every man. CECIL.

Youthful excesses are drafts on manhood and old age, most generally finding them bankrupt and beggars or not finding them at all.

VOICES OF NATURE.

Habits of youthful piety are drafts on God, payable at sight, for the support and comfort of manhood, old age, death, and immortality.

IBID.

Sinful habits are grave-clothes of souls, by which they are bound by Satan for an everlasting burial.

IBID.

Centre-pieces of wood are put by builders under an arch of stone, while it is in process of construction, till the keystone is put in. Just such is the use Satan makes of pleasures to construct evil habits upon: the pleasure lasts perhaps until the habits are fully formed, but, that done, the structure may stand eternal; the pleasures are sent for firewood, and the hell begins in this life.

COLERIDGE.

THOUGH THY WAY BE DARK AND LONG,  
THINK OF THEM THAT NOW ON HIGH  
HAVE ATTAIN'D THE VICTORY.  
IN A MOMENT 'TWILL BE PAST,  
AND THE ENDLESS DIE BE CAST.  
IN THAT PLACE WHERE TIME IS NOT,  
THOUGHTS THAT ARE ON EARTH FORGOT  
TAKE THEIR PLACE AND EVER DWELL,  
SET IN CALM UNSPEAKABLE,  
AND ENSHRINED IN SILENCE STAY  
TO ABIDE THE DREADFUL DAY.

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## PREFATORY REMARKS.

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The substance of the following volume was prepared at the instance of the Young Men's Christian Association of Charleston, S. C., and was delivered as one of a course of lectures during the past year. As some things in its application refer to that city, it is deemed best to retain their original form, both for usefulness there and as an illustration of the analogous and proportionate adaptation of such associations to other cities and communities.

The substance of the discourse, however, was devoted to an exhibition of the nature and claims of such associations in general, and may, it is hoped, and as the author has been encouraged to believe, be useful for distribution, as an introduction to a true knowledge of their character and importance,—as an encouragement to young men who are not, as well as those who are, professors of religion, to become associated with them,—and also as a portraiture of what these associations ought to be, what by the blessing of God they may be, and what in order to fulfil their perfect work and ministry of love they *must* be.

And may that divine Saviour from whose glorious gospel these associations derive their life make this and every other means employed for their advancement powerful, through His Holy Spirit, to the salvation and sanctification of many souls! Then shall these thoughts

However poor portray'd, set forth to view  
With feeble eloquence, be such as may  
Arrest some glance, some thought, which, entering in  
The door of the life-kindling, shaping soul,  
May haply there take root in tender soil,  
In youth's soft heart plant the immortal shoot  
Of heaven-born virtue, which shall bear him fruit,  
And bind his locks with amaranthine wreath;  
May to the fount of action entrance find,  
That streams which issue thence may bear the tinge  
Of hope and dread expectance of the Judge  
With echoing blast of the archangel's trump.  
Reader and writer on that morn must meet:  
Thrice happy, could this theme arouse but one,  
That, when all hearts are open'd, then this mark—  
(On which men's fate is made to hang alone)—  
Whether he has loved God or has loved self,  
Has lived to Christ, or while he lived was dead,—  
May on his soul be found by God impress'd  
This is the mirror wherein souls are seen;  
This is the Book. On this the scale depends.  
This is announced to the eternal years,  
And such alone pass to the rest of God.



## YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS.

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### THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION.

In addressing you, my young friends, I will, without preface, endeavour to present the nature and claims of Young Men's Christian Associations.

In doing so, the very first point to which attention shall be directed is the principle of association on which these Societies are based.

The principle of association holds a conspicuous place among the most potent forces that are now acting upon the world,—silent, invisible, and unpretending in its working, and yet powerful in its results beyond all other moral agencies. This has become proverbial. “Union is strength,” and “United we conquer, while divided we fall,” are now familiar applications to every interest of humanity of our Saviour's aphorism that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and of those other scriptural proverbs that “in the multitude of counsellors there is safety,” and that in them also “purposes are established.”

The foundations on which this principle of association is based are deep-laid in the most essential powers and sympathies of our nature. It takes hold of them all, and combines them all in one concentrated, steady, and progressive force.

Association becomes WISDOM, by the united counsels of the multitude it brings together.

Association is also POWER; for this wisdom is power,—power to ascertain the true character and dimensions of the evil to be overcome or the good to be secured and the best time and manner in which that evil is to be assailed, and thus bring together all the resources of such combined energy that can be brought to bear upon the designed end. Ants are very insignificant creatures; but when associated together they can build cities, fill them with well-stored granaries, and wage resistless warfare against their enemies. A bee is very tiny, and, individually, very powerless; but bees when associated in swarms are more than a match for the fiercest animals, and for man himself. A single wolf may well be dreaded; but a full pack of hungry wolves must blanch with fear the stoutest heart, even though clad in mail and armed *cap-a-pie*. And thus also it is that, while one sinner can destroy much good, and one spiritual enemy is to be feared, it is when combined in a godless con-



federacy, or into a well-disciplined host, that virtue and patriotism may be filled with well-grounded alarm and aroused to that conflict which finds in union strength, and in patriotic valour, victory.

Association therefore becomes wisdom and power for evil or for good in proportion as it is the combination of the wisdom and power, the virtue or the vice, of many. And while in itself it is only an abstract principle, having no vitality or will, it becomes endued with marvellous potency, and generates even the principle of LIFE. Life depends not upon the existence of any individual particles or even of organic structures, but upon a body in which many such are organically united and fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth, and the whole animated and controlled by one living spirit. And so it is not in any single separate member of a class of people that their social, civil, political, moral, or religious life is found, but in the association of that class in some form of organized and well-conducted union. Osiris, whatever we make this mythological character to represent, is dead and inoperative so long as his members lie scattered over the world, and becomes instinct with life and power only when these *dissecta membra* are reconstructed in one living body. A body may be organically perfect in every limb, joint, and muscle. The lungs may play and the heart beat. The eyes may see and the ear hear, and the hand grasp and the feet move. And, while the mouth can receive and the stomach digest nourishing food, that body may live and move and have being. And yet it may be a paralyzed, feeble, halting, and imbecile body, incapable of any active, strenuous, energetic exertion, of any high, patriotic, or benevolent enterprise. But let those various organs receive the vitalizing, sustaining co-operation of all the myriad invisible nerves; let these, however silently and involuntarily, contribute each in their own minute locality their proportion of strength; and, by that association of parts and powers, a body otherwise feeble and inoperative becomes strong, and powerful, and capable of indomitable energy.

The power of any body, therefore, lies not in the combination of organs all equally strong, vigorous, and important. Some are and must be such. Some are and must be prominent:—the eye to see, the tongue to speak, the head to plan, the hands to execute, and the feet to convey and sustain. But these are not on this account more essential, though more observed and honoured. The lungs which play, the heart which beats, the nerves which feel and receive and give quick and lightning sensibility, are equally essential. And, in like manner, an association of men, to be strong, must combine rich and poor, humble and great, learned and ignorant, wise and simple,

thinkers, labourers, soldiers to fight, sappers and miners to prepare the way and remove obstacles, those that "wait beside the stuff" and manage the internal concerns, and the poor wise man whose counsel on an emergency may save the city.

Thy servants militant below  
 Have each, O LORD, their post;  
 As thou appoint'st who best dost know  
 The soldiers of thine host:  
 Some in the van thou call'st to *do*  
 And the day's heat to share;  
 And in the rearward not a few  
 Thou only bidd'st to *bear*.

Blessed and most gracious encouragement to all—in all times, ages, circumstances, and with whatever of strength, talent, means, or influence—to associate together in the Lord's service, under the Master's eye, and with the Master's promise that if there be only a willing mind it is accepted, "not according to what a man hath not, but according to what he hath," and to what he purposeth in his heart.

By no new path, untried before,  
 Thy servants dost Thou lead;  
 The selfsame promise as of yore  
 Supports the selfsame need:  
 The faith for which thy saints endured  
 The dungeon or the stake,  
 That very faith, with hearts assured,  
 Upon our lips we take.

Though scatter'd widely left and right,  
 And sent to various posts,  
 One is the battle that we fight  
 Beneath one LORD of hosts.  
 We know not, we shall never know,  
 Our fellow-labourers here;  
 But they that strive one strife below  
 Shall in one joy appear.

They need, O LORD, thy special grace  
 That fight in this world's view,  
 But in the sick-room face to face  
 Is Satan vanquished too:  
 Both need the same protecting hand  
 To keep them undefiled,  
 And both shall in Thy presence stand,—  
 The martyr and thy child!

But association not only concentrates knowledge, accumulates power, and creates social life; it awakens sympathy. As face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man. It is instinct with sympathy. It responds with electric force to every impulse from kindred souls. Individually, man holds his opinions timidly, and ventures to act upon them cautiously and with doubting unbelief. But when they are embodied in a constitution, adopted by others, and represented in living acts, they receive a strength which is ever augmented by the play of sympathy in a community of associated efforts. Common

principles, interests, employments, and enjoyments, are its very life-blood and impart at once vitality, energy, and sympathy to any society.

Association is, on all these accounts, the fountain of PLEASURE. It draws together. It inspires confidence. It gives play to all the social tendencies of our nature. It entices a man out of his own solitary egotism, vanity, and pride; irradiates his gloom; sweetens his bitterness; cheers his solitude; dries his tears; inspires hope; kindles ambition and rivalry to excel; and enlarges, ennobles, and elevates by the full activity it provides for all the powers both of mind and body.

But, to pass on from this very fruitful topic, I would only further remark that association secures PERMANENCE, STABILITY, and GROWTH. Life in one may wane, while it waxes strong in another. Faith in one may be weak, while in another it is vigorous. Hope may shine tremblingly in one, and yet burn brightly in his neighbour. Health may fail in some, and yet increase and strengthen in the rest. Interest in the common object may lose its power over some, while others become ignited and rekindle the expiring fire. And thus, while existing members may perish, yet this takes place so gradually that THE ASSOCIATION may remain unchanged, or even strengthen and increase.

#### ALL ASSOCIATION POWERFUL—CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION GLORIOUS.

As an ASSOCIATION, therefore, we cannot but regard this society as a body which commands our most lively and earnest attention to its PRINCIPLES and ENDS. As an association, it is an embodiment of knowledge, power, life, sympathy, enjoyment, and permanent and progressive stability. But whether it is such for good or evil depends upon its principles and ends. An association is a living, organized, gigantic power. But, if its associating principles are evil, it will only resemble the accumulated mass of snowy particles which congeal upon the mountain's brow until they constitute the avalanche, the fall of whose illimitable mass carries resistless destruction to the plains beneath. But if, on the other hand, its cohering principles are benign, such an association resembles the accumulation of those same vaporous particles in the clouds of heaven, which are borne along by the winds until they pour down upon every dry and thirsty field the refreshing, fertilizing rain.

What importance, therefore, is attached to this society by the fact that it is a CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,—an association based upon Christian truth; animated by Christian principles; actuated by Christian motives; breathing only the atmosphere of Christian love; inspired by Christian fellowship, sympathy, and

experience; guided and sustained by Christian life; looking for its wisdom and strength to heavenly teaching and divine power; cementing its bonds by mutual prayer, intercourse, and encouragement; and aiming only at the Christian and God-like ends of mutual instruction, improvement, usefulness, health, happiness, and prosperity, and all these for the body as well as for the soul, for this world as well as the world to come, for eternity as well as time!

What sublimity and glory are found in the contemplation of such an association! How does it tower above all others outside of the church, like David among his brethren, or Mount Zion among the other hills of the Holy Land, or the church of God among all other associations existing, or capable of existence, among men!

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION ORIGINATED BY CHRISTIANITY.

This leads me to observe that the principle of association, like every other good and perfect gift, is from above, and is the direct result of that very Christianity which constitutes the avowed basis of this society. Though apparently so obvious and simple, and so capable of universal application, nevertheless, the principle of association was altogether unknown in the ancient world and among the most civilized and refined nations. Men were indeed always banded together by the force of circumstances, by sudden and temporary impulse, by stern necessity, or by the overmastering power of despotism. But anterior to Christianity men had no principle to combine them together into voluntary and permanent bodies, and no common end to sustain and animate their hopes. The very reverse was the object aimed at by every government, and by every individual. Separation, segregation, and cautious isolation were necessary alike to personal security and to undisturbed public authority.

"They forged the links of martial law, that bind,  
Enslave, imbrute, and mechanize the mind."

Combinations were conspiracies, or the explosions of a volcano,—the terrific ministry of inward fires, which after their devastating outburst soon congealed, and left the world neither wiser, nor better, nor disenthralled. The will of one or of a few men, or the caprice of tumultuous passion and wild cabal, determined the fate and fortune of millions.

The principle of association had its origin in Christianity and its first exemplification in Christian churches. Here first the world saw men voluntarily combining together upon the basis of truths individually received,—under rules and forms publicly acknowledged,—under officers chosen from among themselves,—and for the accomplishment of ends common to them all and yet not bearing upon the selfish interests of any.



Here first was exemplified that divine spirit of Christian love,—

"That fire which in each breast burns all beside,  
All that is earthly, all of selfish love,  
Projects of low-brow'd indolence and pride,—  
Until they feel in Christ they live and move  
And breathe regenerate life of those above."

Thus promulgated and developed, the world has learned the unspeakable value of this principle, and has found in it the lever for overthrowing the mightiest dynasties, and for accomplishing the greatest revolutions in political and scientific theories; so that association is now the very first principle in all movements for social, civil, or moral reform.\*

\*Guyot says:

"Nevertheless, gentlemen, the Greek, who carried the individual culture of man to so high a pitch, knew not how to establish the social relations on a solid basis, nor to organize a national body, nor to combine the peoples subjected to his influence into a system of nations strongly united together. I wish for no other proofs than that terrible Peloponnesian war, that fratricidal struggle, from which dates the decline of Greece, and the lamentable history of the Empire of Alexander and his successors. The Greek principle is *individuality*, and not association, and this is still further determined by the race, by the tribe; that is, by nature, and not by *voluntary agreement*.

This political and social work is a new work, and is entrusted to a new country and a new people. The centre of the civilized world again changes place; it takes a step further towards the West; its circumference enlarges; it embraces at once the South, the East, and the West. Rome, more skilled in the arts of conquest, and of establishing solid and durable political ties between the nations, combines in one and the same social net-work all the civilized nations of the Ancient World. The place she occupies in the very middle of the basin of the Mediterranean, seems to foretell that she is destined to become the metropolis of all the cultivated peoples who dwell upon its shores. This vast empire recombines the various elements of all the foregoing epochs in one and the same civilization, and the Roman world, having profited by all these advantages, offers the spectacle of the most brilliant social epoch of which the history of antiquity has anything to say.

And yet, in spite of all these advances, if we look somewhat nearer, what inability to accomplish the aim of humanity, what universal selfishness and corruption! No common faith binds together the nations, aggregated, rather than united. Rome exacts only one worship, that of the Emperor, who personifies the state. On all sides, conquerors and conquered still are found, and in this land of liberty one-half of the men are slaves to the other. The Roman world, like all the rest, is to perish by its own vices.

Thus far, as you see, gentlemen, man has attempted to go his own way, growing up without God. He has not, however, been abandoned, as his progress shows; but he has exhausted all the spells and conjurations this procedure enabled him to try. He is convinced of his weakness; doubt takes hold of him and devours him; despair stands at his gate. All the literature of the Roman Empire confirms this. He has passed from the idolatry of nature to that of man; from the idolatry of man to that of society, represented by the head of the state. He must return to the true God, or there is no hope for him in the future.

It was then that the meek form of the Saviour appeared upon the scene of the world. What comes he to teach upon the earth? He recalls man to the only God, *personal, free, full of love, merciful, the God of salvation*. He proclaims the equal worth of every human soul, for he died for all." "Earth and Man," pp. 309-310.

CHRISTIANITY PROVIDES FOR CHRISTIAN, AS WELL AS ECCLESIASTICAL, ASSOCIATIONS.

The time, we hope, has also come, when, under the inspiration of Christian truth, Christian principle, and Christian motives, this divinely-originated principle of association will be employed in combining together the talent, influence, piety, and energy of all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours, for the advancement of the cause of Christ, the promotion of each other's welfare, and the best interests of their fellow-men.

God forbid that I should say aught to dim the lustre or cloud the glory of the churches of Christ!

"There my best friends, my kindred, dwell;  
There God my Saviour reigns."

In a Christian church I was myself born, nurtured, and fed. With it are associated my earliest aspirations, my warmest thoughts, my purest joys, my most sincere and substantial pleasures here on earth, and my clearest views and most satisfying earnestness of heaven. The heart needs a resting-place such as the world, with all its paradises, and home, with all its delights, cannot give; and it finds this in the church. The soul needs a temple where it may retire, apart from all human teachers and all the vain janglings and discordant voices of man's philosophy, and, sitting at the feet of Jesus, have its best principles strengthened, its loftiest aspirations encouraged, its sublime instincts realized, and its unutterable and unquenchable longings satisfied; and it finds this in the church. The soul needs also a sanctuary where it may retreat from every stormy wind that blows and from every rude and heart-lacerating grief; and, as it sits under the droppings of the sanctuary with great delight and hides itself there under the shadow of the all-protecting wings until every calamity is overpassed, it finds this refuge in the church. The church is the fold where the "foot-sore traveller," weary and heavy laden, finds rest, and the social spiritual home—

"So like a little heaven below"—

where the sad and solitary and broken-hearted, who go mourning amid the desert crowds of cities, find sympathy and solace and a welcome greeting among the brotherhood of Christ,—

"No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home."

Christianity has certainly not yet developed all its energy as the light, the heaven, and the salt of the earth. As the power of God not only for the salvation but also for the regeneration of the world, its force is still to a great extent latent, because

unapplied. Like some mighty engine which gives motion to a thousand wheels for the perfection of some useful products of manufacture, but which is capable of accomplishing indirectly still greater results, so is it with Christianity. Directly and primarily, it is designed to impart vitality and permanent activity to Christian churches, of which its TRUTH is both the pillar and the ground. To these pertain the promises, provisions, ordinances, and preaching of the gospel,—the grand instrumentality for the world's conversion unto God; and churches therefore are ordinarily the birthplace of souls and the wells of salvation.

But, in addition to this primary and organic development, Christianity is capable of, and is designed to accomplish, manifold beneficial results. It does not bring forth and train up and teach all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, to its children, that, when nurtured in the admonition of the Lord and grown to the stature of men in Christ Jesus, they may keep at home beside their mother's lap, dandled upon the knee of indulgence, fondled in the bosom of her soothing affection, feasted on the joy her promises afford, and luxuriating in the beauties of holiness. Oh no! she trains their hands to war, to labour, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Girding up their loins and pointing to the hosts assembled for battle—

What dread spectators watch their destined way!  
How 'mid assembled worlds they stand alone!  
"Come on," she cries; "list in the heavenly war,  
With shield of faith and with the Spirit's sword,  
Strong in the mail of God's unfailing word—  
The Urim and the Thummim of the Lord."

She sends them also into her vineyard to work. She leads them forth to the out-lying field, which is the world; and, as the eagle stirreth up her nest and sendeth forth her new-fledged young that they may circle with her in her heavenward flight, so does the church send forth her sons into the field of duty and of conflict, that they may fight manfully the good fight of faith, work the work of God, and learn

How much by prayer one fervent soul may throw  
Into the scale where kingdoms now are weigh'd.

It is therefore the very object of the education imparted by Christian churches to make their children wise to win souls for Christ; to save the perishing from death; to multiply the trophies of redeeming love; to bring in many outcast wanderers to their Father's house; to scatter wide around them the seeds of life immortal; and thus to prove that, while her end is salvation and her destination eternity, Christianity is the life and power of all charity, philanthropy, patriotism, morality, order, and of whatsoever things are just, true, pure, honest, lovely, and of

good report,—if there be any virtue and if there be any praise among men; to prove that Christianity is, in short, the true catholikon for rent and torn humanity,—a law of attraction operating in the very highest region of humanity, the region of thought and conviction,—and “a prophecy that the Babelisms of men shall yet be healed by the consummated act of which the day of Pentecost was but the beginning and the pledge.”

To this invisible and silent operation of Christianity in its indirect influences and beyond its ecclesiastical limits, will be attributed without controversy the origin and progress of modern civilization; the triumph of law, order, and liberty, which are its natural offspring; the sense of personal responsibility, and its collateral rights; the elevation of morals; the power of conscience in creating conscientiousness, and, therefore, confidence; and that ever-widening commerce which is based upon the pre-existence of these fruits of the tree of life, and which is so opening up all parts of the world rapidly and so indissolubly binding them together in one vast community,—

Many, yet one, in union manifold.

To the Christian, therefore, the world is a field of duty, life a sacrifice to duty, his fellow-men the objects of his love and pity which duty does not less require than acts of justice and of honesty:—

Holiness unto the Lord  
Marks his staff, his scrip, his board,  
Harp and spade, and book and sword,—  
All the royal priesthood use.  
Faith through all doth worth infuse;  
Giving even immortal worth  
To the lowliest tasks of earth,  
So that, lit by holy love,  
Lustrous as the stars above,  
Each with its own colour dight  
Is replete with living light.

Animated by such a spirit, the Christian cannot live alone, or for himself alone. He is borne towards heaven on the wings of zeal. His very prayers come back to him laden with thoughts of love, and he is thus led to associate himself with all who, like him, are eager to devote themselves to the zealous prosecution of every good work.

Christianity therefore provides in itself—in the very spirit it infuses and the principle of association it embodies—for the union of all its followers, not only in churches, but in all things practical, evangelical, and experimental, wherein, notwithstanding their ecclesiastical differences, they are “agreed, and in advancing which they are able to walk by the same rule, to mind



the same things, and to be zealously affected, striving together for the furtherance of the gospel, and provoking one another to love and zeal and good works."

The existence of various churches leads to manifold good results, and is, no doubt, an intended adaptation to the present weak and imperfect condition of even the holiest Christians. The evils incident to such different churches are, however, very great, and constitute a very serious hindrance to the progress of the truth. It may therefore be well expected that some provision has been made for the accomplishment of the incalculable good, and for the avoidance of the serious evils of so many separate tribes, with their selfish jealousies, in the one Israel of God. Now, this, we think, is found in the principle of association combining together Christians of every evangelical name, for the united prosecution of labours of love,—a fact powerful enough to answer all the objections of captious and sneering infidelity,—the spontaneous avowal that all the disciples of the Great Teachers are servants of the "one Lord," and animated by "one Spirit."

For what else did the divine love and wisdom of God reveal and exemplify this powerful principle? Not surely to be dormant. Not to putrefy like corrupted air imprisoned in some pent-up well, there to breed the morbid elements to sectarian jealousy and bigotry, of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Not to be caught up and imbibed by the world without and appropriated to its own temporal and transient interests. Nor was this principle of association revealed that in the hands of God's enemies it might confederate together the powers of earth and hell against the church and her sacred oracles and ordinances. No! This principle was given, that, like the vital air we breathe and the balmy waters by which we exist, it might find its vitality, power, and purity preserved and multiplied by free and loving expansion,—by an illimitable diffusion permeating every lane and byway, every field and garden, giving and receiving, blessing and being blessed, as it goes;—and that it might combine together in one atmosphere of holy love, in one swelling tide of Christian activity, all the separate particles of divine life.

Love is like the ocean,—  
Ever fresh and strong;  
Birth and life and motion,  
Speed and strength and song,  
With which, the world surrounding,  
It keeps it green and young.

Yes! love is ever flowing,  
Flowing ever down,  
And through all lands going  
From the heavenly throne.

What a Satanic perversion of this principle of association, then, has led Christians hitherto to run down Christianity into exclusive sects, to erect around them impassable walls, and to employ so much of their talent and ingenuity in perpetuating old rents and in multiplying new ones!

Christians have too long and vainly endeavored to secure perfect unity in all things believed,—in both the *credenda* and the *agenda*, the *belief* and the *practice* of Christianity,—and to make this the basis of unity, communion, and love. It is now time to allow Christian love to exercise its irrepressible desire to embrace as brethren in Christ Jesus all who give evidence of having within them in living efficacy the truth as it is in Jesus. This will generate not an ecclesiastical union merely, but what is still more heavenly, a personal and divine union,—*personal* between believer and believer of every name,—and *divine* between all believers and Christ their Head. This also will originate and increase Christian zeal. For, as the heat of the earth is produced not so much by the direct rays of the sun shining upon it or from its relation to that body, as by the refraction and reflection of heat imparted, so it is not merely by the direct influences of Christ upon the heart that Christian zeal is enkindled, but still more by that zeal reflected and refracted in the atmosphere of love by Christ's peculiar people made by His Spirit zealous for good works.

Indeed, analogy may lead us to suggest—what the word of God authorizes us to believe—that this wide sphere of Christian development is essential to the order and harmony of churches themselves. There is an analogy between the Christian system and our planetary system. In both we find numerous independent bodies, separate and complete in their own organization and revolving upon their own axes and within their own proper sphere, and, by the necessary laws of their planetary or ecclesiastical existence, giving light within that sphere. But in both also we are led to the contemplation, as necessary to the perfection of the system, of a still wider sphere, in which all these revolving bodies are attracted and preserved in their order and harmony, by one great central body around which they move,—

Forever singing, as they shine,  
The hand that made us is divine.

Glorious and sublime conception! Oh the depth and height of the wisdom and power of Christ the Sun of righteousness! the great central luminary of the spiritual universe! who binds together in one divine system by the one law of love, all his churches and all his children on earth and in heaven in time and

throughout eternity, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge and of the love of the Son of God!

The children of this world have been wiser in their generation. They have employed this principle of association in the cause of political reform, of scientific discovery, of national regeneration, and of infidel and atheistic revolution; and with what transcendent, irresistible, and invariable results! And why? Because they applied it to some end to be gained, and not to some theory or doctrine to be expounded; to some work to be performed too vast for any one man or for any single society among men to achieve, but which, by a division of labour, and a concentration and a perseverance by successive labourers through successive years, might certainly be accomplished.

So also must Christians act. Leaving every man to associate himself with the church of his conscientious preference, and as his primary and most important duty to consecrate his time, influence, and means so as to make that church all that a church ought to be,—this principle of association calls upon Christians to combine together in Christian institutions, societies, and associations, not to take up the doctrines of Christianity, but, on the already-established basis of these doctrines, to take up and accomplish the work of Christianity, the great practical work of Christian charity,—the carrying of the gospel to every man and to every man's home and business and bosom, and, together with the gospel, that peace and good-will, that love and help and consolation, which are its necessary manifestations, its life-giving fruits.

This, then, is the field opened up to Christian young men, and to which these associations lead them forth. The great idea has been conceived. It has taken root. It has sprung up unheeded and without observation. It has drunk in celestial air. It has been nourished by the dews of prayer—

Unseen, unknown, shrouded with many a care,  
And scarce discernible to fleshly eye.

But it has shot up a goodly tree. Its branches now extend from sea to sea and from shore to shore. Its leaves are already for the healing of many nations;—

And soon, released, its stature fills the sky  
And soars the child of immortality.

In these associations we have the true Evangelical Alliance,—an alliance which, leaving all doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and political questions, consecrates itself to the one blessed aim of combining, elevating, and sanctifying young men;—for the one great end of gathering in the outcast, of being a friend to the friendless, a home to the homeless, and a blessing to all.

"On this to fix the heart and eyes  
 Will heal the sores of controversial strife,  
 Strengthen our wills, our motives purify,  
 Humble our hearts, make single-eyed to see  
 And single-hearted to embrace the truth,  
 And to behold the pregnant thunder-cloud  
 Bound with the rainbow which surrounds the Judge,  
 Which bids God's children hasten 'neath the roof  
 Of God's own sheltering house, and there await  
 His coming on with tender offices,  
 Each emulous his brother to befriend,  
 Each to forget himself. Such have no ear  
 For controversial triflings and debate,—  
 Naught that responds within to party strife.  
 To Christ's loved church, by endless discord riven,  
 Such love alone her union can restore,  
 And gain the blessings to that union given.

#### THE GLORY OF MAN, AND OF YOUNG MEN SPECIALLY.

As a CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, therefore, this society presents to us the combination of wisdom, power, sympathy, and stability, under the guidance of heavenly truth, divine principle, and God-like love, for the holiest ends.

But its claims to our grateful consideration, high approval, hopeful expectation, and liberal assistance, are enhanced by its remaining feature,—namely, a CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG MEN.

"The glory of young men is their strength." Man, in every stage of his existence, is a glorious being. He was made in the image of God.

God gave to him to live 'mong living men,  
 And set eternity around his birth,  
 E'en as the circling sky surrounds the earth.

He was created but a little lower than the angels. He was exalted to the dignity of being God's representative, interpreter, and governor in the earth,—to serve him, to honour him, to glorify and enjoy him, here and in heaven, now, henceforth, and forever. To this high calling man's nature was adapted. In this man found his happiness. And to this inward disposition and character, and this outward activity and service, the gospel is designed to restore man.

AS MAN is therefore a glorious being, so every capacity of man and every period of his life have their peculiar glory. As compared with other animals, man cannot, it is true, glory in his inherent physical strength, since in this he is far inferior. But, in the comparison of man with man in the different stages of life, youth is characterized by the development of man's greatest strength, energy, and activity.

The glory of CHILDHOOD is that docility by which it is trained and matured for future usefulness, and that artless simplicity



and conscious weakness which lead it to seek in others its wisdom and its strength.

Within the arms of the great Lord of love,  
As in the teacher's seat, thou gentle child!  
We see thee, all our wisdom to reprove,—  
That we may learn of thee, thou wisest styled;  
Learn virgin innocence, learn mercy mild,  
Unlearn ambition, unlearn carefulness.  
Oh life where state of angels is fulfill'd,  
And saints who little have and need still less!  
A state which nothing hath, yet all things doth possess.

The HOARY HEAD, on the other hand, is a crown of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness, not weary in well-doing, but still bringing forth fruit unto God, and, by its well-stored wisdom and experience, bearing testimony for the truth and comfort of a life of piety.

And who is yonder man?  
Himself a fleeting span,  
His shadow lengthening as the sun goes down,  
While growing sorrow marks him for her own;  
But o'er his head a golden crown  
The parting sun hath thrown.

His worldly wealth on earth forsaking,  
Wing'd sides he finds, and light-wing'd feet,  
And on his way his comrades is o'ertaking,  
While Mercy now descends, her pilgrim true to meet  
And lead him, hand in hand, to her enduring seat.  
Man seems to climb a mountain's side,  
And, ever as he mounts, to leave behind  
Green spots and flowers,  
And shade of verdant bowers.  
Bidding adieu to golden prime,  
He flings aside to envious time  
The richer thoughts that were to hope allied,  
From barren to more barren still to climb.  
Then, as he upward mounts, upon the wind  
No more he hears the streamlet's melodies,  
And childhood's freshness on his spirit dies.  
But, now that he hath gain'd the height,  
He seems to walk upon the glorious skies.  
The sun that sets upon the seas beyond  
Flings back the radiance of his golden wand,  
And clothes him with a new, celestial light.  
Anon he seems more large than man's estate,—  
An angel seen on heaven's bright burnish'd gate.

In like manner, YOUTH IS GLORIOUS when, in its dewy freshness, its whole energy of body, soul, and spirit is consecrated to God, sanctified by his truth, devoted to his service, bearing the heat and burden of the day, and thus growing up into the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

"Light are their steps who in life's earliest dawn  
The mountain-tops of heavenly life ascend,  
Brushing the dew-drops from the spangled lawn,  
Nor ever from the straighter path descend,

Fixing their eyes upon their journey's end,  
 Ere sin has wither'd up their morning bloom,  
 While streaks of purple morn their cheeks illume,  
 And on the head still sparkles heavenly dew,—  
 To see that dew like incense rise to heaven,  
 It is a precious sight, which angels view  
 In trembling joy and hope; immortal love  
 Hangs o'er it, watching every opening hue.  
 Plant, then, in youth's soft heart, the immortal shoots  
 Of heaven-born virtue; it shall bear thee fruit  
 And bind thy locks with amaranthine wreaths."

#### GREAT MEN HAVE PERFORMED THEIR GREAT ACTIONS WHILE YOUNG.

The strength and energy of youth have been characteristic of the greatest warriors, statesmen, orators, musicians, and poets of the world. Few of these have seen old age. Genius almost invariably covers itself with flowers and sheds around its fragrance in the spring and summer of life, though there have been a few instances in which it has ripened its fruit in the golden harvest of a bright autumnal sky. The same is true of the philanthropists, the benefactors, the self-sacrificing missionaries, the Christian merchants, and the holy and devoted men and women who, in every age and in every community, have wrought righteousness, been zealously affected in every good cause, shed around them the radiance of a holy example, scattered abroad in every direction the seeds of piety, lived in the affections of grateful hearts, and rested from their labours here to enjoy the recompense of great reward in heaven.

Lovers of souls, the children of our God!  
 Ye are the generation whom the skies,  
 And they who heaven's immortal floor have trod,  
 Early admit into their sweet society.  
 Such share their ministries; such angels prize;  
 With such God's children everywhere rejoice,  
 And join with them their prayers and charities,  
 Till heaven itself shall gladden at their voice.\*

#### THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH A SOLEMN TRUST.

The strength and energy of youth are therefore talents of inestimable worth, because they constitute a power of such incalculable force. They are gifts of God. They are a solemn trust, a holy prerogative, the rule and measure of a future reckoning and of an eternal retribution.

Neither is this a trust for life. As youth is the flower of life, so strength is the bloom and fragrance of the flower, soon, like it, to wither and decay. The impassioned energy of youth ceases with it, and leaves behind only the strength of habit, of will, and of experience; or, on the other hand, the weakness of ignorance, the bondage of a depraved heart, a defiled and polluted disposition, and a seared or vindictive conscience. "God

\*See note A.

giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."\*

The strength of youth may be prostituted to vice, exhausted in selfish and sensual indulgence or in lazy indolence and inactivity, and, by hurrying man to an early grave or a premature old age, treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and righteous judgment of God, who will recompense every man according to his deeds and according to his ability and opportunity to know his duty,—tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that has done evil and that has not done good when it was in the power of his hand to do it.

"Oh, awful hour that endeth all our time!  
When we before our Judge shall trembling stand  
Who shall disclose the heart's deep labyrinth,  
When sins of night shall see the face of day,  
When earth and heaven as witnesses stand by,  
And faltering tongues to gather'd worlds confess?"

Oh, how sad and melancholy, then, it is to see young men, in a world

"Where nothing seems unreal there  
Save what worldlings hope and fear,  
While o'er a gulf they fleeting pass  
On a bridge of brittle glass,"—

how melancholy, in such a world and with such a fleeting life, to see young men, under the full pressure of all those energies which might be and ought to be their glory, plunging headlong into the very depths of ungodliness, worldliness, and vice,—of drunkenness, surfeiting, and uncleanness,—yielding every power of soul and body as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,—and thus laboriously serving that master whose wages is death—the death of self-respect, of all pure and high aspirations, of hope, of character, of strength itself, and of all well-grounded expectation of salvation from the wrath to come.

Dead to all sense of shame, breaking loose from the innocence of their childhood, casting off the comely habits and pious practices of a paternal home, they plunge into excess of riot; and, borne onward by the impetus they have acquired in the descent, like one running down hill who cannot stop although he would, when they reach the mouth of the pit they are swept

\*Isaiah xl. 29-31; Ecclesiastes xi. 9.

over it into perdition. Such young men—very significantly called *fast*—make fearful progress, waxing, like “seducers,” “worse and worse.” Their night grows darker and darker; the edge of conscience duller and duller; the process of petrification in their heart more and more rapid till it acquires the hardness of stone; when, wallowing in the mire of the lowest sensuality, they can make even a boast of sins from which, on the day when they left their father's roof with his blessing on their head and a mother's warm tears on their cheek, they would have shrunk with feelings of indignant abhorrence, exclaiming, “Am I a dog, that I should do such things?”

#### YOUTHFUL SINS MANHOOD'S SORROWS AND DEATH'S PANGS.

The remark is often made, when the spectacle of such a young man is presented, that “he is sowing his wild oats,” that after a time he will come to himself and reform, and that he may even yet be converted and saved and become perhaps a burning and shining light in the Christian church. Most dangerous and damnable delusion! Be it far from thee, O young man, O young Christian, O Christian parent! For while it is true that the natural tendency of youth is to the indulgence of unbridled passion, and this with less care about concealment than is felt in after-years, and while it is further true that, in some instances in which passion has been thus indulged for a season, divine grace has been mighty enough to subdue that passion, and convert the open and hearty servant of sin into the open and hearty servant of Christ,—yet to say that the indulgence in sin of any kind either renders more probable the conversion of the sinner, or in any way fits the sinner for conversion or for usefulness after conversion, (if by mighty grace he is ever converted,)—or to say that sin of any kind can be indulged in at any period of life, without imminent danger,—is not more at variance with the teachings of human experience than it is with the lessons of the word of God.

During a ministry of nearly twenty years, says a pastor, I have seen a great deal of “wild oats” sown; and I never yet have seen any thing but “wild oats” *reaped* from “wild oats” *sown*. I have seen many a one in early manhood “throwing the reins upon the neck of his lusts,” who, ere the prime of manhood was passed, had become an outcast from society and filled a dishonoured grave. And the more warm-hearted and generous the natural disposition of the young man was, the more rapidly has vice done its fearful work, and the more terrible the wreck it has made. I have seen others giving way for a time to the indulgence of passion, who afterwards became the hopeful subjects of divine grace. And I have heard them, as they have smarted under the consequences of their youthful sins,



lament their course in early life, in language like that of Job—"Our bones are full of the sins of our youth, which shall lie down with us in the dust."

A venerable old man, an elder in a Presbyterian church, was once surveying a tract of land, as an executor, in order to divide the estate. He and his companions reached a certain cleared lot on the mountain; and, turning to the gentleman with him, he said, "I never see this lot without a feeling of shame." "Why so?" asked his friend. "Because as many as fifty years ago, when I was a boy, I came with some other boys to this lot one night and took some watermelons without asking the owner's leave!"

This aged Christian would often dwell upon the sins of his youth and mourn over them.

It so happened one evening that Uncle H. (says a narrator of the fact) sat by the old-fashioned open fireplace, in which a cheerful fire was burning. He sat as if lost in earnest meditation, and occasionally a sigh escaped him. An individual present, noticing this, said, abruptly, "Well, what is the matter now?" Uncle H. seemed disinclined to answer the question; but, on being urged, replied, "I would rather have kept silent; but, as you insist on knowing, I am thinking about the sins of my youth; and, I must say, they trouble me!"

There was once boarding with him a religious professor who took different views of justification from those entertained by "Uncle H." This man seemed to consider justification as nearly synonymous with forgetfulness of past sins. They often conversed on this point, the one asserting that when Christ forgives our sins we ought to forget them and have no more trouble about them, and that, if we do not, it is evident that they are not forgiven; the other replying that David, though forgiven, said, "My sin is ever before me," and that Paul, though forgiven, spoke with grief and shame about his having "persecuted the church of God."

This must be so. It is the law of nature. It is the necessary result of our mental and moral being. It is also the law of the kingdom of grace. As a man sows, so shall he reap. As a man sows, and what a man sows in the spring-time of life, he must reap in a multiplied harvest in the summer of manhood and the winter of old age. If he sows wind, he must then reap whirlwind. If he sows to the flesh, he must reap corruption. If he sows wild oats, he must, like the prodigal, vainly try to fill himself with the husks which the swine do eat. "Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "Thou fool, that which thou sowest thou sowest not that which shall be," but which shall bear mul-

tiplied products, and "from every seed its own body and its own fruits."

"Who sows the serpent's teeth, let him not hope  
To reap a joyous harvest."

"There can be little doubt that most persons settle the question of their eternal destiny while young. This is the time of roots and seeds, the time of foundations, the time of fountains and laws, the time of principles and prophecies, that are to be developed and fulfilled in the man and in the angel, good or bad. This is the time of quick and vivid sensibility to impressions from abroad, whether good or evil; the imitative time of our being; the reproducing time of examples; the time of intense feeling and of energy and impulse in following the heart and in carrying out its purposes."

The process of self-education, as Foster says, is then going on, even though unobserved, and tending fast towards the ultimate fixed form of character.

"One season cannot be changed for another, the summer for the spring, nor the autumn for the summer. We go on, indeed, sowing seed all the way through life; and each successive period of life is a most impressive reality,—a period of probation and of seeds for the next period,—because what we were and what we did yesterday is continually coming out in consequences to-day. But the one grand seed-period of our being, the period of the oaks that build the ships in which our fortunes are embarked for eternity, the period of all the commanding fixtures and features of the character, is never repeated, and is ordinarily early in life. The roots of our earliest habits twine themselves all about our immortality. The trunk of character, strengthened by such roots, is immovable; and the branches spread themselves out a mighty shade of foliage. So prodigiously, intensely energetic is the impressible period and growing power of our being. And it depends therefore upon what we meet with and entertain at such a period, whether we shall become apostles of good or of evil in our fallen world, because it meets with the growing, germinating power, the enthusiastic, imaginative, impulsive tendency, and carries the mind onward to results."\*

How awful, then, Christian young man, is the infatuation of young men around you, growing up in all the wildness and inflexibility of their evil and corrupt natures, and filling the land with their rank and baleful luxuriance, their poisonous exhalations, and their soul-destroying fruits!

"Oh, what a wilderness about us lies  
Of spirits, each wrapp'd round in fleshly cell,  
Could we but see beyond each other's eyes  
This universe of souls 'mong which we dwell,

\*From Dr. Cheever's "Voices of Nature."

Each in himself a world,—a heaven or hell,  
 Therefore it is of life's short span  
 So often written in the sacred page,  
 Which, pointing immortality to man,  
 Holds up in mirror life's short pilgrimage,  
 In every form which may the soul engage,  
 And then each talent weighs in duty's scale.  
 Mysterious thought of never-ending age!  
 At sight of which the strongest heart should pall,  
 And dread, ere heav'n be won, lest life itself should fail.  
 Each hour is like an angel, which, with wings,  
 Comes from and goes to heaven; yet empty ne'er  
 Comes or returns, but some occasion brings,  
 And hastens back to heaven, the tale to bear  
 Of evil, or fresh store to treasure there.  
 Pity looks down from heaven's o'erarching roof,  
 Awe-struck to see how swift our hour is sped,  
 To see while day and night weave the thin woof,  
 Eternity is hanging o'er the thread,  
 And then that hour that numbers 'mong the dead  
 Numbers us 'mong those that die no more!  
 Time marks not death with unperceived tread  
 Steal on behind; but, while he numbers o'er  
 His many days to come, death shuts the eternal door."

#### THE GLORY OF YOUTHFUL PIETY AND YOUNG MEN THE STRENGTH OF EVERY COMMUNITY.

On the other hand, how delightful is it to behold young men, inspired with the divine idea of association, united, together on the basis of love to Christ and love to sinners, sustained by the principle of faith in Christ, obedience to him, and recognition of the common salvation and the common brotherhood of humanity!

"Who can discern the beauty of that power,  
 When endless life within the soul is born!  
 Dawns on the soul the everlasting morn!  
 The aspiration of its lofty aim  
 Stilling the noise of passion and of mirth,  
 Set on her heritage of endless worth,  
 And her immortal birthright bent to claim?"

The strength and power of any community is in its young men. For weal or woe, they give it tone and character, and life and energy. They will also be its future leaders. Out of their ranks must come forth the husbands, the fathers, the merchants, the operatives, the municipal fathers and legislators, the pillars both of the state and of the church. The very being and, much more, the well-being, of this as of every other community, rests, therefore, upon the opinions, character, and habits of the young men whose strength is now their glory or their shame.

#### THE PECULIAR TEMPTATION OF YOUNG MEN.

And hence, of all other classes, our young men most emphatically stand in need of the benefits and blessings of Christian association. That energy, strength, and boldness which con-

stitute their glory is at the same time the source of their greatest danger. Their pride, passion, and love of independence, like unbroken steeds, spurn the control of reason, laugh at experience, and, dreaming of no sickness, disease, or death, give the reins to passion, rush into the very whirlwind of temptation, and sport merrily while their hand is upon the lion's mane and their feet upon the hole of the serpent. The general arrangements of business, its ungodly "HASTING after" riches, its utter disregard of the health, happiness, and morals of the young men who are its instruments, and the whole nature of their surrounding circumstances and conditions, expose our young men to peculiar and almost irresistible temptations.

The perverted spirit of our free institutions, the want of consideration, intellectual pride, immorality, and the inevitable tendency of spiritual darkness to shut out from itself the light, lead many young men to skepticism in one or other of its Protean forms. If too conscientious and enlightened to fall a prey to this snare of the destroyer, the same causes render young men unwilling to submit fully to the gospel, and induce them to take shelter from the storm and tempest of conscience in some refuge of lies, some man-constructed system of doctrine or philosophy, by which—imagining they must think for themselves, that is, hold opinions different from those around them—they are easily beguiled. "I have been," said such a one, when dying, "a most wicked and incorrigible opponent of the whole Christian system; and I know not why I was so, but for *the pride of opinion.*"

In these ways, and by every device, Satan blinds the eyes of young men, closes their ears, and locks their hearts, so that they may permit their day of grace to pass away. This is all he wants; and his end is gained, whether this is accomplished by vice, folly, frivolity, or vain philosophy, falsely so called. "The young Lord Littleton was in early life the subject of deep impressions, under the influence of which, he informs us, he retired at a particular time to his chamber to pray, with the intention of committing his soul to God. As he was on the point of kneeling to engage in prayer, he concluded to turn aside and close his window-shutter. At the window he saw a band of musicians parading the streets. The splendour of their appearance caught his eye; their inspiring notes ravished his ear; he rushed from his apartment to the street, joined in the crowd, banished his seriousness, and felt the strivings of the Spirit *no more.*" This was all that Satan desired; since in gaining this he gained, and Lord Littleton lost, all. If the fly can only be attracted by its glare to circle round the flame until, intoxicated, it falls into it, its wings are lost; and, if not destroyed at once, it is destroyed inevitably. "I am a candidate for a fortune,"



said a young man recently in the flush of health and the ardour of hopeful prospects, "and I am bound to die rich!" Alas! within a year he was dead, and that too before he was rich either in earthly or in heavenly treasures.

Ah! thus it is that, while Christ and his bride the church stand in their very presence, beckoning them to heaven and holding forth the crown of an immortal heaven with its imperishable, eternal weight of glory,—thoughtless and blinded youth cast their all upon a moment's die,—eternity, the prize of life, salvation through the blood of the Lamb;—and, Esau-like, barter every thing for baubles, "and buy only eternal pains!"

Of all others, therefore, young men stand in need of association,—of the power which is found in the example, influence, advice, encouragement, sympathy, companionship, and occupation which are so powerfully brought to bear upon them by association with those of their own age who have like passions, feelings, and temptations with themselves.

#### YOUTH THE CRISIS OF MAN'S CHARACTER AND DESTINY.

Youth is the crisis of a man's character,—the tide of life which, taken at its height, leads on, according to the power that moves it, to a life of glory and of goodness, or to one of shame, hard impenitence, and unbelief. Of the crimes of Great Britain, one-fourth are ascribed to persons under twenty-one years of age. In three years, eight hundred and thirty-three offenders under that age were committed to the Glasgow prison.

The number of criminals under twenty years of age, imprisoned in 1815, in Britain, was 6,803, or 1 in 449 of the population between ten and twenty years of age; while in 1844 they amounted to 11,348, or 1 in 304 of the population of the same age.

In London, between the years 1844 and 1848, the proportion of criminals under twenty years of age to the population of the metropolis under that age increased from 1 to 56 to 1 in 47.

One leading question of the present age, therefore, is to know how to deal with juvenile delinquents.

#### THE NUMBER AND IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG MEN IN ANY COMMUNITY.

Such are the temptations of young men, and such the danger of their being lost to society, and of their becoming a curse instead of a blessing.

Now, there are probably not fewer than between two and three thousand young men in this city. They are essential to its very existence. There is not a store in this city which would not be closed but for the needful services of its young men; not a counting-house, not a workshop, not a printing press, which

would not be broken up if deprived of their vigorous and energetic young men. As principals, as bookkeepers, as clerks, as hands and operatives, men still endowed with the energy, enterprise, and strength of youth sustain and carry on the various busy operations of this and of every other mercantile community.

The character of any city, therefore,—of its business, its manufactures and its arts, depends on the character of the young men.

The permanence, prosperity, popularity, and profitable success of every mercantile concern depend vitally and to a very great extent upon the honesty, the address, the energy of the young men, upon the hearty zeal with which they enter into the interests of their employers, and upon the intelligence and pleasing and obliging manners with which they conduct themselves.

And hence it follows that the future progress and elevation of this and of any city, its prosperous rivalry with other cities in their rapid increase and development, depend more than any thing else—except the blessing of God, which alone maketh rich and buildeth up any community,—upon the wisdom, spirit, enterprise, large-hearted liberality, far-reaching sagacity, and therefore that fear of God which is the source of these virtues and of all true greatness,—which characterize its young men.

#### THE IMPORTANCE AND CLAIM OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS.

Such, then, being the relation of young men to every community, (not now to refer to our families, to our social character, and to our churches,)—such being their supreme importance to its prosperity,—such being the peculiar circumstances which isolate young men as a class from those around them,—and such being the peculiar temptations by which their virtue and pious purposes are assailed,—it is very evident that an association of young men on Christian principles is of unspeakable importance. The leaven which shall purify this mass must be mingled with it. The light that shall enlighten it must radiate from the centre outwards. And the all-pervading and elevating power of Christian principle must be brought to bear upon our young men through the sympathy and love of young men like themselves.

#### THE ADVANTAGES THEY SECURE TO YOUNG MEN.

THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION presents, therefore, very strong attractions to every Christian young man in the community. Would you, my dear young friend, strengthen and invigorate your own Christian life;—would you enjoy the blessedness of doing good,—good to those most needful of it,

to whom you have peculiar access, over whom you have peculiar power, and in benefiting whom you most effectually advance the interests of society at large;—would you increase your own happiness and gather round you all the delight springing from sympathy and fellowship with kindred spirits;—would you secure to yourself friends, acquaintances, a home where you can cultivate both the head and the heart?—then become an active, zealous, and warm-hearted member of some Young Men's Christian Association.

ALL CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN OF EVERY DENOMINATION MAY  
UNITE.

No Christian man—who loves the gospel more than he does any creed of human origin, and Christ in his divine glory and grace and infinite all-sufficiency more than he does any denomination upon earth—need hesitate to unite in such association. It is simply, sincerely, and purely evangelical. It is not polemical or aggressive in any sense except as against sin. It is neither sectarian, doctrinal, nor ecclesiastical. Its basis is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Its power is the practical, experimental, saving, and sanctifying knowledge of Christ formed in the heart the hope of glory. Its instrumentality is the gospel as the only regenerator of man individually and of man socially. The reception of that gospel, and love and devotion to that Saviour, are the only qualifications for union with such an Association. It knows no church in particular, except so far as membership in it gives evidence of these qualifications being possessed by its representatives. It looks beyond particular churches to the church visible,—the holy catholic church throughout the world; and it looks upward above all rites and forms and peculiar tenets, as held and loved and deemed vitally important upon earth, to membership in the church spiritual and invisible,—constituted of all those who are born by a new celestial birth, whose names are written in heaven, whose aims and hopes and joys are one, and to whom it is a blessed privilege to labour together with Christ in seeking and saving the lost.

No one, therefore, need keep back. There is here no compromise of doctrine, order, or principle. To associate Christian young men; to strengthen and confirm their faith and hope and zeal; to provide comfortable rooms and reading, and perhaps physical refreshment\* for young men generally whether they are professing Christians or not; to encourage their friendship; to aid and assist them in every way; to preserve and increase in them all good purposes; to deliver them from temptation; to present before them the example of living, lov-

\*To the extent of tea, coffee, butter and bread, as in London.

ing, and cheerful piety, and thus to lead them by the cords of a man to the Saviour and salvation; to be ready, on any occasion of public sickness and calamity or of private and personal necessity, to lend their services to the cause of suffering humanity; and to devise and prosecute labours of Christian love among the young, the poor, and the destitute:—this is the sum and substance of the end contemplated by such an association.

Young Men's Christian Associations, therefore, have powerful and undisputed claims to the approbation, encouragement, sympathy, and assistance of every member of the community; of every one to whom the character of our future husbands, fathers, and rulers is dear; especially of every man of business; and more emphatically still of every one who names the name of Christ.†

#### WHY THESE ASSOCIATIONS REQUIRE LIBERAL ASSISTANCE AND LARGE RESOURCES.

It is therefore very evident that Young Men's Christian Associations can only fully succeed by liberal help, as well as by

†In this connection I would give what prominence and permanence I may to the following suggestion relative to city clerks and young men employed in similar ways. It is from the Presbyterian:—

"MESSRS EDITORS: A young gentleman, my relative, a clerk in New York, lately paid me a visit, and, among other matters, he informed me that he did not go stately to church on the Sabbath, because he had no pew or seat, and was wholly unable from his little salary to rent one. He said, also, that very many clerks spent the whole Sabbath at home, and not a few of them in utter idleness and folly; that they could not afford to pay for seats, and, being very often '*looked*' out of pews, and not rarely turned out by the sextons and others, they had become bitter in their feelings against religious people, and wholly infidel in their sentiments.

"I cannot now write any thing elaborate on this matter, but would respectfully suggest whether our religious and moral merchants cannot devise a plan of renting seats or pews, and in pleasant parts of the churches, for their clerks and apprentices, requiring all such to attend worship on the Sabbath, and refusing to employ any who will not agree to such an arrangement."

"The foregoing is from a respected clerical brother, who states no imaginary case; nay, we have reason to apprehend it is but one of many similar cases. In our large cities there are thousands of apprentices and clerks who, from straitened means and want of friendly encouragement, have no connection with our churches. They are not only unable, however good their will might be, to purchase or to rent pews, but, feeling that a constant attendance at any place of worship would be regarded as an intrusion, they stay away, and become utterly indifferent to religion, or positively hostile to it, because its privileges can alone be purchased with money, which they cannot command. It is well worthy of consideration whether there is not a radical defect in the system which is now pursued, which to so great an extent, excludes the worthy poor from our sanctuaries. Why should those who happen to have money be a privileged class, driving back into corners and galleries those in all moral and religious respects their superiors? And if this distinction cannot well be overlooked, why, at least, should not all our churches have interspersed, in the various aisles, pews well furnished for strangers, where they could feel as if they were not intruders? And why, as our correspondent suggests, should not employers rent pews for their clerks and apprentices, which would be amply repaid by the improved morals of these subordinates? Some remedy should be found for an evil which actually exists. Many young men who will become a disgrace to society by their vices might thus be rescued to be the future supports and ornaments of the church.—EDS. PRES."



the general sympathy and fervent prayers of the community at large.

Every Association ought to have a very comfortable, spacious, well-aired and well-situated house,—A HOME. This building should be so arranged as to provide a convenient reading-room, well supplied with papers and one or more periodicals;—a sitting-room commodiously furnished and suitably aired and warmed;—a library supplied with fresh, attractive, and profitable books;—and a hall for social meetings, private lectures, essays and debates, Bible classes, and for whatever other exercises may be suggested by a wise experience.

Every Association should have the means also of providing lectures from distinguished men in all parts of our country, and of publishing and circulating such lectures, addresses, or tracts as would be found useful to young men.

There is thus a necessity for means far beyond those hitherto provided, both for making such associations what they have not yet been, and for opening up to them ways of usefulness and sources of attraction not yet contemplated.

#### AN APPEAL TO MERCHANTS AND CITIZENS.

I appeal, then, on behalf of the Young Men's Christian Association among you, to every merchant and man of business in the community. Here is a way in which you may greatly benefit the young men of your adopted and cherished city;—at once please and profit them; encourage them to be and to do good and to eschew evil; preserve and purify them; endear them to you, to each other, to their friends, families, and churches; stimulate them to intellectual and moral excellence, and to energy, perseverance, honesty, and honour; render them better men, better clerks, better salesmen, better cashiers, better agents, better creditors, and better merchants, better every way, whether as friends of your family, suitors to your daughters, husbands to your loved and cherished ones, fathers of your families, officers in your banks, directors in your railroad companies, aldermen in your Council, and officers in your churches.

Would it then be too much to ask every merchant, every house of business, every man to whom the services and character of young men are important, if not every family and every Christian, to make an annual contribution to this association? In what other way could you do so much to advance your own interests as by encouraging young men to unite together in zealous co-operation for their own improvement;—by providing them with ample means for attracting others to their rooms, their meetings, their lectures, and their various churches;—by banding together those who, with energy, should also have the disposition to be zealously affected in every good work

by which the health, happiness, and moral and spiritual improvement of the community may be promoted;—by thus elevating the standard of character attainable and maintainable by young men;—by providing an increasing body of young men in whose honour, honesty, and energy, if not also in their piety, the community might repose confidence in any position of trustworthiness and zeal,—by thus rendering vice more vicious, immorality more degrading, gambling, drunkenness, extravagance and dishonesty in every form more disgraceful,—by demonstrating that true religion is identified with all that is honourable, manly, and noble in character, and that it is promotive of the highest interests and happiness of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come,—and that, in the language of an ancient proverb, there is a shame (the shame of being religious) which is sin, and truly shameful, whereas there is a shame (the shame of being sinful, irreligious, and cowardly and inactive in the cause of God) which is life and glory;—that voluntarily to eschew evil and avoid it, to choose good and pursue it, to make good our object and our end, and to live for others at the sacrifice of self and for the love of Christ, is the very essence of heroism; and that he who by shining acts marks out his ascending way is in the path of glory shining more and more unto the perfect day,—

Still nearer heaven, still more and more divine  
Her mansions, as he nears the eternal shore.

Were our leading men of business to set an example in this matter; allow to their young men their evenings for bodily recreation, and for mental, moral, and spiritual improvement; and encourage their attendance at the rooms and meetings and social unions of these Associations; what glorious results might we not look for in the future character and prosperity of our city, our families, and our churches!

#### WHY ALL CHRISTIANS, AND YOUNG MEN SPECIALLY, REQUIRE ASSOCIATION.

But, whatever may be the course pursued by others, let me encourage you, my young friends,—and all you who have strength and energy and spirit enough and love enough to Christ and to the souls of young men to unite with them in doing good,—to avail yourselves of the advantages of the Young Men's Christian Association.

It is, as I have shown, in its nature, principle, object, and instrumentality, CHRISTIAN,—generated, inspirited, and sustained by the divine life of Christianity. That life quickens in individuals the sense of responsibility, gratitude, and love to God and love to souls perishing around them. But it also enlightens and enlivens man's social nature, and leads him to

seek encouragement, help, and strength in those who, like himself, are quickened and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. This is the instinct and security of the Christian, whose life is now a warfare against sin within and temptation without.

And in the very woods around us may we not behold a lesson on the necessity of this union and co-operation? 'The branch cannot but wither that is cut from the parent vine.' The leaf depends for life upon its protecting stem. The young and tender and even the hardy trees find protection from the stormy blast and the biting frost in their congregated union. And the elements that are needed to cherish life in one tree are provided by another, so that they minister to each other's comfort, sustenance, and life. And wouldst thou, O Christian, be a dweller in the woods of human life,—whether you stand in the crowded mart of commerce, in the shady grove of domestic and social life, or among the cedars of Lebanon, the garden of the Lord where trees of righteousness are planted by the rivers of living water,—and yet think to dwell alone in selfish independence? "Behold, the beasts shall hurt thee, weak, naked, houseless outcast. Disease and death shall track thee out as bloodhounds in the wilderness." Or, if thou standest, thou shalt be found a poor, weak, and broken reed, shaken by every wind and bared by every rude blast. Thou hast a social spirit, O, man. Alone, thou darest and wantest all things. Thy strength and comfort are laid up for thee in the deep well of humanity. Bless God, therefore, who has ordained for you the ties of family, of kindred, of country, and, above all, of Christian fellowship; and who has thus multiplied your resources, out of weakness has made you strong, and supplied all your need from the storehouse of sympathy and friendship and the sweet communion of saints.

Christian fellowship is therefore absolutely necessary to Christian life, comfort, and growth. We are indeed dependent creatures. We cannot exist alone. We live in each other's life, and are moulded by each other's character, opinions, habits, and disposition. Sympathy creates a moral atmosphere through which we are assimilated and fashioned by those associated with us. So God has made us. So experience teaches us, for a man is known by his company. And so God instructs us, for "evil communication corrupts good manners, while he that walketh with the wise shall be wise."

The reason is very obvious. We are dependent on the good will and good opinion of those associated with us. How—asks the divine philosophy—can two or more persons walk together in the bonds of intimate and familiar acquaintance unless they are agreed? There will of necessity be constant differences, jarring, and ill feeling. To avoid this, to be at peace, to walk

and work and will and enjoy together, we feel constrained to conform ourselves to those with whom we wish to associate as intimate companions. There is a mutual and growing assimilation, first by the avoiding, and then by the abandoning, of all points of difference.

Example, too, is all-powerful. It exhibits the thing done. It makes manifest its reality and its practicability. If evil, example seems to guarantee safety, satisfaction, the good-will of those who assume to be manly, independent, and above the dictation of God or man. If good, example on the other hand commands our homage, condemns our low, sensual, and irrational life, and gives us a living proof that true piety is the only source of true dignity, honour, happiness, and peace. And whereas an evil example is congenial to our naturally-evil heart of unbelief, and is commended to us by all the witchery and devices of the Evil One, on the other hand conscience, experience, observation, the Bible, and the providence of God,—God himself, good angels, good men, and good women in an eminent degree,—conspire with good example in making it powerful to good impressions and to holy and happy results.

#### ASSOCIATION ONLY POWERFUL WHEN VOLUNTARY.

It is, however, very important for me to observe, and for you to remember, that the power of association lies chiefly in its being voluntarily sought and willingly reciprocated. The association even of the wicked, the profane, the drunken, the irreligious, and the scoffer, when it is only endured because of the necessity of circumstances,—as, for instance, in the prosecution of business, in the case of impenitent parents, husband, wife, family, or school-fellows,—may even serve to awaken disgust; to unveil the heinousness, the meanness, and the vulgarity of sin; to create aversion and loathing; to arouse our spirit of independence; and to generate principles of virtue and habits of piety:—

Gathering strength and beauty from the storm,  
The unyielding oak grows to majestic form,  
Strengthening its root deep hidden from the view,  
Feeding on air, and drinking heavenly dew.  
Thus habits mould the soul to be a place  
Wherein may dwell forms of immortal grace,  
While thoughts and tempers in the spirit's shrine  
Grow into shape and take the form divine,  
Fed by the life of the celestial tree,  
And drinking heaven,—elastic, stainless, free.

Thus were Moses and Daniel prepared by God for the bravest services in his cause far from the pious homes of Israel. They grew in saintship amid the impurities and effeminacy of a heathen palace. Josiah also took root and blossomed into an early and fragrant piety amid all the blood and filth and pollu-



tion of the house of his father Ammon and his grandfather Manasseh. "I have never doubted," said Newton, "that God could convert the heathen, since he converted me."

It is only, therefore, when we choose the sinner's company, walk willingly in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful, that their character and curse become inevitably ours.

But this is equally true of the example and association of the pious and the good. We may enjoy this inestimable blessing in the person of our parents, family, and friends,—in a husband, or a wife, or a child, or an employer, or a business companion. But if we do not appreciate it,—if it is not really and voluntarily and lovingly improved,—it not only does us no good, but oftentimes is perverted into a curse. Our pride and vanity and self-will and contrary dispositions and desires are offended; and so sin, taking advantage of us, works in us hatred and enmity and unbelief and hardness and impenitency of heart.

The power of association lies, therefore, in its being voluntarily sought, and in our thus putting into the hands of others the key to our hearts and submitting them to the plastic power of example and companionship. And when therefore young persons voluntarily turn away from any willing intimacy and heart communion with the vile and ungodly, and associate themselves with those to whom Christianity is truth; Christ the perfection of glory as a model of character; piety the highest style of man; the service of God perfect freedom; and godliness the chiefest joy;—when, I say, young men or women thus voluntarily join themselves together, they give to association all its mighty power to mould and fashion the character and life into conformity with the true, the beautiful, and the good.

How pleasant, therefore, and how good a thing, it is to see the young men of our different churches, and young men not yet members of any church, associated together in these societies! May you dwell together in unity amid the green pastures and the living waters of the common salvation, no root of bitterness springing up to trouble you;—the herdsmen of Lot having no contention with those of Abraham; Ephraim not vexing Judah nor Judah Ephraim; and the only strife being to provoke one another to love and to zeal in every good word and work!

CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN URGED BY GRATITUDE TO PIETY, ZEAL,  
AND DEVOTION.

And as Christ's love alone can unite his children,—as Christ's Spirit alone can "pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which we are nothing worth, and without which whosoever

liveth is counted dead before God,"—let a sense of your own infinite indebtedness to Christ's mercy keep you ever near to his throne of grace, that he may ever keep you near to himself, and shed abroad his own love and the love of the Spirit, and all the fruits of the Spirit, in your heart.

When you look back to the hole of the pit from which you were hewed out, and consider how after being made a living stone you were built by the finger of God into that noiseless temple which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;—when you call to mind how, amid the fretful circumstances of passing time, weary and heavy-laden and tossed about by every vain distracting care, Christ called you by his still small voice into a mountain apart, and there amid the unearthly calm of his own blessed presence spake peace and rest to your troubled soul;—when you remember how, while you lay in your blood, polluted, an outcast foundling, abandoned by all earthly pity,—

He bathed thee erst in life's eternal fount,  
And took thee through the gate of his own grave  
Unto the haunts of the celestial mount,  
With dews of life thy dying soul to lave;—

when, I say, you think upon these things, you will be ready to exclaim—

Ye shining ones that walk on heaven's high wall,  
Look down; behold me from your heights around;  
Come, see and hear, bear witness to my call!  
What miracle of mercy have ye found  
Equal to mine?—With sins encompass'd round,  
A lonely exile in the vale of tears,  
One struggling 'mid the rocks, his comrades drowned,  
An unarm'd one travelling 'mid hostile spears,  
With such an one to walk the Almighty Lord appears.  
Me hath he called to love him; me hath he deign'd  
To call his child; for me his life-blood pour'd;  
And when I turn from him, then he is pain'd.  
To all things else his all constraining word  
Sets bounds, and o'er them throws his holding cord  
But to our love: He asks our being whole.  
And who unto the soul can bounds afford?  
He who can all the infinite control  
Alone can meet her love, alone can fill the soul.  
I ask not wealth; I ask not length of days,  
Nor joys which home and rural sights bestow,  
Nor honour among men, nor poets' praise,  
Nor friendship, nor the light of love to know,  
Which with its own warm sun bathes all below;  
Nor that the seed I sow should harvest prove;  
I ask not health, nor spirit's gladdening flow,  
But an assured pledge of rest above,—  
A heart to feel and recompense Thy love  
By loving Thee all earthly things above.

#### THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION EXERCISED BY BOOKS, ETC., AS MUCH AS BY PERSONS.

Let me, before passing from this point, remind you, my young friends, that the power of association is, to a very great

extent, exercised by the dead as well as by the living; by the absent as well as by the present; by those you have never seen as well as by those in whose society you live and move; by books, by pictures, by music, and by all our in-door and out-door amusements and occupations.

Much, if not the greater part, of man's association in this day of general knowledge and cultivation is found in the silent companionship of the books and newspapers with which he daily communes, and in all the other employments of his daily life. These constitute much more truly his associates, and exercise over him a much more powerful influence, than his living companions. This is the atmosphere in which he really lives and moves and has his being, and which, all the more powerfully because all the more unconsciously, creates and sustains his peculiar taste, temperament, opinions, and habits.

This is a point of unspeakable importance to the young, and yet but little considered. Young men, it has been said, are like the chameleon. They take their colour from the objects with which they are brought in contact, be they personal or material. They have as yet no character of their own, fixed and immovable; and being, like sheep, gregarious, they rapidly yield to the impulse of any leader and follow a multitude to do evil. Now, it is in books that this communion of soul is most intimate, unreserved, absolute. Continents and centuries present no obstacle to such intercourse. Time and space are annihilated by this mental and moral association. Man walks continually in the presence and under the influence of those who have drawn him to their silent society and by the irresistible attraction of their powerfully-entrancing witchery of style and tragic story. Thoughts that would kindle a blush of shame if uttered, scenes which would shock by their abominable shamelessness if witnessed, actions which he would condemn as equally dishonourable and degrading, and principles which he has been taught to regard as impious and profane, a man may allow to pass before the eye of his mind, to enter the ear of the soul, and to awaken spiritual impressions, perceptions, and feelings. And thus, in the confidence of his own personal morality and uprightness, a man may permit visions of hell to be daguerretyped upon his heart, and leaven of corruption to mingle with the very elements of his being:—

Youth, confident in self, tampereth with dangerous dalliance,  
Till the vice his heart once hated has lock'd him in her foul embrace.

The power of God's moral government over such a man is by this silent and unobserved process destroyed, and the soul-inspiring ideas of God, eternity, heaven, and hell, being eclipsed, the heart becomes insensible to every pure and holy motive, because the light and love and power of the gospel are effect-

ually shut out from the darkened soul. The citadel is undermined before alarm is given. While the man sleeps, tares are sown and soon spring up to choke the better seed. And while he lies slumbering in dreamy self-indulgence on the lap of this Delilah, his hair is shorn, his strength is gone from him, and he walks forth as at other times into the midst of temptation, not knowing that God has departed from him. Satan having entered into his heart, finds that instead of resisting he becomes an easy prey, a willing captive, a degraded bondsman, submitting, by a self-entailed compulsion, the whole man to low, sensual, and grovelling pleasures and pursuits.

#### THE EXPLANATION OF A MYSTERY.

This is the secret of that mystery which often meets us in the world, when there is some sudden and unlooked-for development of vice, crime, or ungodliness in the life of some man or woman whose outward conduct, associations, and professions were all hitherto irreproachable; and why also it is that so many live in impenitency and unbelief against all the likelihoods from parental piety and instruction, of their early conversion and consecration to God.

Their secret associations have been with books, pictures, and papers which feed the ungodliness and sinful carnality of their natural hearts. Their in-door, inward life has been one of vanity and fictitious demoralizing worldliness. They have thus been living in an atmosphere of sin, and generating the streams of a growing sensuality, carnal-mindedness, and practical atheism, until the pent-up waters at length burst forth in some open development of the iniquity which had long been accumulating in the heart. The poisonous malaria which had so long been secretly inhaled has vitiated the very life-blood of their moral constitution, so that, set on fire of hell, raging with the fever of sensuality or of vice in some other form, and burning with the insatiable thirst of impetuous desire, they rush like a frenzied patient from the restraints of home, and plunge headlong into crime, dissipation, or dishonourable courses. The fire-damp long secretly generated has permeated the recesses of the soul, and only needed the spark of temptation to develop it in an explosion of terrible, consuming flames,—

Must it be so because

I did not scowl temptation from my presence,  
Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,  
And only kept the road, the access open?  
I but amused myself with thinking of it.  
The free will tempted me,—the power to do  
Or not to do it. Was it criminal  
To make the fancy minister to hope?  
Where am I? Whither have I been transported?  
No road, no track behind me, but a wall  
Impenetrable, insurmountable,



Rises obedient to the thoughts I mutter'd  
 But meant not! Mine own doings tower behind me!  
 A punishable man I seem: the guilt,  
 Try what I will, I cannot roll from off me.

Thus is it that without going into the open ways of sin, the course of this world, or into the haunts of vice; without seeking in the theatre a provocation to lust and intemperance; and without going hand-in-hand with the openly ungodly and profane; young men—ay, and young women too—are often led by secret passages down to the pit of destruction, become assimilated in feeling, thought, and character with those from whose contamination they once shrank; and are thus prepared to riot with greediness in that uncleanness, the very thought of which would once have been repelled as disgusting and diabolical.

CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN EARNESTLY IMPLORING TO SEEK THE SALVATION OF OTHERS.

Christian young man, whosoever thou art that redest this appeal, when you remember that you

From that dark prison-house  
 Once pass'd, and, from Egyptian bondage freed,  
 Wast led between the walls of hanging seas;—

that you too have wandered on the edge of death,—

Of death that dieth not,—of endless death,—  
 And drunk the intoxications of the cup  
 Which fill'd your fancy with unreal joys;—

and when you consider that these, your companions in age, in nature, and in destiny, are on every side and in every way surrounded by temptations and snares and “damnable delusions,” while yet, in awful infatuation and cased in self-confidence, they are treading on the verge of never-ending woe and abusing to their greater condemnation their brief life “big with the fate of all eternity;”—oh, will you not run to their relief?

A few years since, says a writer in the *American Messenger*,—a very powerful auxiliary to those who would do good,—as with others I was detained for some hours on the shore of one of our inland lakes by an accident upon a railroad, I witnessed an incident which deeply affected me. Near where we lingered, impatient of delay, there was a deep, wide, and very rapid stream, whose waters roared and foamed and plunged over the rocks into the lake. In this perilous current there was suddenly discovered, as we sat listlessly gazing, *a human form*, apparently lifeless, and rapidly moving along with the flood just at its entrance into the lake. Quick as thought the party were astir; but before the older men could adopt a plan for a rescue, one of our number, a young man of slender form but of a large heart, plunged into the hurrying waters and struck out

in pursuit of their victim. It was a desperate struggle. Those who watched it from the shore were almost paralyzed as they gazed. But at length the struggle terminated in the triumph of the daring young man. Like one determined to do his best, he laid hold on the object of his exertions, and slowly made his way with his burden to the shore, where, amid the shouts of the spectators, he at length laid it down. The drowned man, to all appearance dead, after long and persevering effort to restore him, proved to be alive, and, before we left the place, spoke, stood up, and walked about in our presence.

This incident suggested to my mind, says the writer, such thoughts as these:—

That noble-spirited young man saved a *body* from death. But there are *souls* exposed to an infinitely more dreadful death, rapidly passing down the perilous current of time, and every moment nearing the awful ocean of eternity. Who shall go to the rescue? Old men will counsel and do what they can; but many of them lack the strength and energy for quick and enterprising exertion. Who then are so suitable as our strong young men to plunge into the stream and buffet the waves and lay hold upon the perishing?

Again: if our young men will but make the effort to save the lost, and are successful even in a single instance, they will enjoy not only the approbation of their own consciences and the gratitude of the rescued one, but those shouts of joy over one sinner that repenteth which echo from the heavenly shores. Let such a young man know that he “who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a *soul* from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Nor this alone. In saving one soul, you save many; for one sinner destroyeth many good. A drowning man will drag down, if he can, others with him. A wicked man cannot live alone. He must have company. He must join hand with hand and take counsel together with those willing to be seduced or who are more hardened than himself:—

With mimic joy and fiendish guile  
They on their victim smile:  
One blindly tears life's charter'd scroll,  
And tramples on the sword;  
Another bears the inebriating bowl,  
Or whate'er price they need who sell their Lord;  
While folly laughs, to gain the heart and head  
Of those who dream of life while they embrace the dead.

In the expressive language of Scripture, sinners “hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.” The sinner thus hopes to hide himself in a crowd, to divide the risk, to parcel out the criminality, and to bribe and blind conscience

to be silent. And hence it is not only true that a companion of fools shall be destroyed, but also that fools will destroy their companions. In saving one sinner, therefore, you withdraw one partner from the conspiracy. His influence and power for evil are destroyed. The crowd is diminished, and fear and shame act with redoubled power on his startled comrades. Sinners are afraid. Fearfulness hath surprised them.

And, further still, every soul rescued is a friend, a co-worker gained. He is added to your ranks. He is enlisted in your company. He fights under your banner, and is now ready and zealous for every good work.

In him, too, you have your mightiest argument, your most overwhelming proof; an irresistible appeal; a living exemplification of the possibility and the blessedness of salvation; an epistle which all can see and read; one whom all knew as blind and lame and dumb, now restored to sight, leaping, and praising God who hath done such wonderful things for him; a silent but persuasive demonstration of the reality and glory of piety—

That, could it meet the thoughtful gaze of men,  
Would fill the eyes with tears, the breath with sighs,  
Like rain and winds upon the stagnant lake,  
And so amend the heart.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.

And this God can make your efforts accomplish. Let Christian young men bethink them of their mission and their power. "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." In you "God has ordained strength, that he may still the enemy and avenger."

In the recent terrible calamity occasioned by the burning of the steamer John Jay, on Lake George, when in one-half hour she was burned to the water's edge and all on board were driven into the water, among the most active in rescuing passengers was a lad of seventeen, named William Burnet, belonging to Ticonderoga. He dived down six times and saved a number of passengers. He was at last so overcome by his indefatigable exertions as to be delirious during the night. Three young gentlemen of Philadelphia,—Messrs. Hutchinson,—who very early stripped themselves to their underclothes, after saving their father and three sisters, were, by their energy and advice, instrumental in saving many others. They behaved with great coolness and confidence. Such, also, is your power, your trust, your solemn charge, Christian young men. For amid the daily scenes and intercourse of life, as you go out and come in, as you travel and when you rest, at home and abroad, in the counting-house and the family circle, in the street and alley, and in the rolling car or the winged steamer, you may find op-

portunities of doing good. And thus also, amid the too frequent storms and wrecks of life, may you become the deliverer of the perishing, the praise of the living, and yourself doubly blessed as you see some mother clasping and kissing over and over again her rescued boy plucked from her arms by the destroying waves of temptation, and gone, she feared, hopelessly and forever; or, while you cheer some almost lifeless and self-ruined youth with hopes of mercy, and clinging to him with the grasp of a love stronger than death, bear him safely to the shore. Cling to him; yes, grasp him with a yet holier, more agonizing hope and prayer and confidence. Imitate that heroic woman on board the Northern Indiana, which was also recently destroyed by fire,—Mrs. Fowler. Having made her husband put on the only remaining life-preserver, and tearing away her bonnet already in flames, she plunged with him into the lake. When they rose to the surface she wiped the water from his mouth and eyes and encouraged him to retain his hope of being saved. He continued to struggle with the waves. Half an hour elapsed, and there were no signs of assistance. His strength was rapidly failing. His wife, observing it, tried all the more to cheer him. He said he could not stand it any longer; it seemed as though he must give up. At that moment she heard a steamer coming rapidly through the water. "My dear husband," she said, "a few moments more and we are safe. Don't you hear a boat coming?" He said he did, and, immediately reviving, made all the effort in his power, and struggled for himself and his heroic wife until the "Mississippi" came up and took them, with scores of others, on her commodious decks. Thus, also, my young Christian friend, throw around your perishing brother the life-preserving promises of the gospel; thus convince him that your heart's desire and prayer is that he may be saved; thus wipe from his eyes the tears of despondency; thus smile away the gloom of hopeless despair; and, as the sound of mercy comes from the blessed gospel, point him to the lifeboat of salvation hasting to his deliverance, and urge him with one last desperate effort to lay hold of the rope thrown out for his salvation, and to cast himself into the arms of Him who stands ready to receive and to save him in his uttermost extremity.

In the "Messenger" for February was an account of the happy death of a young man who was brought to Christ through the divine blessing upon a faithful pencil-note handed him by a youthful stranger in the cars between Princeton and New York. The request of bereaved friends to hear from the writer of the note has been answered.

On the evening of the first day of February, a young merchant of New York, being in New Orleans on business, dropped



into the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association of that city, after having addressed the boys of the city workhouse. Taking up the "Messenger" for February, he was looking over it, when two strangers entered, whom he approached as he would in the rooms of the Society in New York, of which he is an active member. He entered into conversation with one of them, whom he was on the point of asking whether he was a Christian, and if not if he did not expect to be, when his eye fell on *the very words* in the article, "Railroad Letter."

"I had not," he wrote to a friend, "read over five lines when I dropped the paper: Is it possible that my query to that strange youth I sat with in the cars has got into the paper? I read on, and immediately felt that I had been the instrument, in God's hand, of converting a soul. Oh, what joy! I never knew till then what pleasure it would be to be conscious of being the means of saving an immortal soul. I retired to my room to thank God for his goodness in showing me some result to feeble efforts in his cause. I have prayed often that I might have this privilege here on earth; and now God has in his own good time, and by such ways as to him seemed best, revealed to me for my encouragement that we do not—yea, cannot—sow in vain."

What a blessed reward has this young Christian experienced from his labours for Christ, in the joy of that happy hour! May not every Christian in whose heart there is an earnest love for souls hope for like sources of joy either in this or in the better world? Would that the inquiry in his letter might lead many to the action it suggests! "If a few words may do so much good, by the blessing of God, oh, why do we not oftener speak then in humble faith?"

Lagging hours, that seem to linger,  
Yet may thus each have a finger,  
Pointing wandering souls to heaven.  
And thus, while lengthening shades of even  
On life's dial fall, and now  
Darker shadows round thee go,  
Yet thy works may pass before,  
Waiting thee,—a blessed store!—  
In their number, weight, and measure,  
Laid up in enduring treasure.

#### CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN MUST EXEMPLIFY CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

To such labours of love and faith and prayer you are summoned by the common feelings of humanity which prompt to pity and compassion for all who are in danger and distress, and this all the more powerfully if they are in such circumstances as we ourselves have known by bitter experience to be imminently hazardous. But Christianity,—embodying the example of Christ, his love, his mercy, his blood and righteousness, his humility and infinite condescension, his sufferings and death, his example of self-denying sacrifice for lost, guilty, ungrateful

men,—this demands from you not only pity, but also mercy. If you only pity the suffering, if you only weep with those that weep tears of agony, and mourn with those who mourn the loss of all that was dear to them, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles, the ungodly, men everywhere, the same? This is humanity. It is natural affection. It proves that you are a man. But to be a Christian—to have the Spirit of Christ, to do as Christ did, to feel as Christ felt, to love as Christ loved, and to do good as Christ did good—you must exhibit more than this. You must not only exercise compassion, but mercy. You must consider men as sinners, guilty, undone, depraved, polluted, unthankful, selfish, sensual, enemies of God and therefore of God's children, loving darkness rather than light, proud, scornful, and not only neglecters but rejecters of the gospel. You must be prepared to receive evil for good, railing for entreaty, cursing for blessing, coldness for condescension, hatred for love, threatening for forbearance, and all manner of evil ungenerously and without cause heaped upon you. This is what you are to expect from sinners. Such is the sad working of sin. Such were you and I. Such are all men in their conduct towards God whom they condemn, towards Christ whom they will not have to reign over them, and towards the ever-blessed Spirit whom they "resist" and "grieve" and "quench" and even "blaspheme." Such was the treatment given to our Lord, who came to his own but they received him not, who was maligned, traduced, betrayed, falsely accused, tried, and condemned, and by wicked hands crucified and slain. And yet his life was a life of mercy. His death was a sacrifice of mercy. His resurrection was an ascension to the throne of mercy, that as the Prince and a Saviour he might there ever live to give repentance and remission of sins, to dispense grace and mercy, and to reconcile, regenerate, restore, and glorify even his enemies and persecutors.

This world, this life, this gospel, every thing around us, are full of Christ's mercies. They meet us at every turn. They are in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the health we enjoy, the capacities we exercise, the opportunities of business we possess, and in the means of living and of supplying our rational desires and delights of which through grace we are possessed. Yea, it is owing to this mercy we are permitted to live and move and have our being, so that the very strength with which sinners sin and rebel and crucify him afresh and put him to an open shame is from the mercy of Christ. Mercy is everywhere. Here she runs to meet the returning prodigal, and opens her arms to fold him to her bosom. Here she pleads with sinners and pronounces pardon over the chief of them. Here she weeps with guilty sufferers and dries the tear upon

sorrow's cheek. "And here, eyeing the storm, she launches her life-boat through the foaming breakers, and pulls for the wreck where souls are perishing. It is her blessed hand which rings the Sabbath bell, and her voice which on savage shores or from Christian pulpits proclaims the Saviour for the lost. None she despises. She despairs of none. And, not to be scared away by the foulest sin, she stands by its guilty bed, and, bending down to death's cold ear,—when the twelfth hour is just about to strike,—she looks into the glassy eye and cries, 'Believe, oh, believe! only believe! for whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

Such is Christ, and such should every Christian be. Such is mercy,—that divine quality which characterizes Christians as "a peculiar people." And let it be remembered that Christ fulfilled and finished his incarnate mission of mercy while still a young man according to the flesh, and that Christ associated with himself—in his labours of love, and in his self-denials and self-sacrifices, his patience, perseverance, and well-doing—*young men*. To such he gave his commission and intrusted the interests of his cause. And to them are we indebted for the establishment, progress, and perpetuity of the church. From their ranks came forth the army of martyrs, the innumerable multitude of confessors, and the great cloud of witnesses in every age. Such, then, as Christ was, such as his apostles and martyrs were, such ought every young man to be. Such, dear reader, ought you to be. Let no man then despise thy youth. Despise and neglect it not yourself. Make Christ your model. Press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. Go thou and do likewise. "Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. For, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," since the love of Christ constraineth all that are Christ's to live not unto themselves, but unto him, and to follow him in seeking to save the lost.

If indeed you would be either known or felt in the world, live not unto yourself. Live for others, or you will be passed by the crowd, as they hurry on, unnoticed and unfelt. You will be left upon the drifting waters, like the useless weed, the rotten branch, or the leaky, dismantled, and abandoned hulk. The world has no use for you unless you are of use to it. It knows you not, cares not for you, unless it is to growl at you because you are in its way, or rail at you because you are an idle drone in the busy hive. The world feels the power of none, heeds none, praises none, honours none, and rewards none, but those who live and labour and do profitable service for it. Slumber and take your ease, and you will be left to do so, while the cars roll on and all opportunity and occasion for doing good in your

day and generation has been passed by forever. And, as it is in the world, so also is it in the kingdom of heaven; for here also no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for it is only to him whose life is Christ—that is, devotion to Christ's service in the salvation of souls—is "death gain." The true Christian, therefore, whether he lives, lives unto the Lord, or whether he dies, dies unto the Lord; whether he lives, therefore, or dies, he is the Lord's.

But continued as well as energetic exertion is necessary in order to be useful to others and healthy and happy yourself. To loiter is to be passed and left behind in the race. To relax is to enfeeble. And to make your impressions and produce noticeable effect, and then leave them, is to write characters on the sand, which the next wave that rolls by will forever obliterate. Enter, then, on your life of holy devotion and your work of Christian zeal, with all the strength of youth and with all the determination of will to persevere; that is, as the converted Hottentot said, take right hold:—hold on: and never let go. And to whatever age and stage of life and of Christian life you may arrive, let this still be your motto. Persevere. Be not weary in well-doing. You will never be too old to do good, nor have accomplished so much as not to be stimulated, for your own good and your Saviour's glory, to be "fruitful even unto old age." Washington was ready even in advanced age to buckle on his armour and meet the call and the enemies of his country; and the hero of Lundy's Lane is also the hero of Chapultepec.

"Wear out, then; don't rust out. 'Why don't you give up business?' said a millionaire's friend, one day. 'You are getting old, and have made enough to retire on.' 'I'd rather wear out than rust out,' was the answer; 'and I must do one of the two. If I give up business now, after having been habituated to it for forty years, I shall die in a twelve-month or two from sheer inaction. I shall rust out. I cannot do worse by keeping on. No! let me die, as the stout knights of old used to say, with the harness on my back.'

"And he was right. Merely as a question of health, the retiring from business of active men, who have been all their lives accustomed to it, is a serious blunder. More have died in consequence of it, as sagacious physicians know, than have increased their happiness,—unless, indeed, they have substituted the work of man-making for the work of money-making, and labour for love of souls and of Christ instead of labouring for filthy lucre's sake. Nature, in fact, wars on idleness. There is not an atom in creation that is long at rest. The rain of to-day was vapour of yesterday, and that, a week ago, was water in the Pacific. The winds maintain forever a circulation of



fresh air, without which vegetables and animals alike would die. No man, however wealthy, has a right to rust out. He violates the laws of his being if he attempts it. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to comfort the widow and orphan in their affliction, is part of the heaven-appointed duty of those who have equally money and leisure at their disposal. Wealth and retirement are not bestowed for riotous living or slothful indulgence. He who sits down, after having acquired a fortune, to spend his days in selfish gratification, literally rusts out soul as well as body. True manhood spurns such a cowardly retreat from the great battle of life as much as the hero would scorn to be found engaged in dalliance when victory was turning against his country. It is only cravens who wish to die on silken beds. The brave prefer to fall with their armour on and their faces to the foe. Wear out! don't rust out!"

"He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him, saith the First and the Last, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on that stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. And I will give him the morning star. The same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will confess his name before my Father and the holy angels. And I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. And I will grant him to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am sat down with my Father in his throne."

Wouldst thou the life of souls discern?

Love is life's only sign.

The spring of the regenerate heart,

The pulse, the glow of every part,

Is the true love of Christ our Lord,

In works and not in words adored.

Then we begin to love indeed;

When, from our sin and bondage freed

By this all-powerful Friend,

We follow him from day to day,

Assured of grace through all the way,

And glory at the end.

#### YOUTH IS FRUITFUL OF EXPEDIENTS.

In thus following Christ you will be aided by your youth, not only because it is strong, but also because it is fruitful of inventions and plans. It will suggest a thousand ways for the better accomplishment of the work of the Lord than perhaps any method of doing good now employed; or, at least, for securing the same results by novel, striking, and attractive agencies. It will be instant in season and out of season. It will not weary in well-doing. It will sow the good seed in the morning and in the evening not withhold its hand, and this, too, beside all waters and along every wayside, not knowing which shall prosper,—this or that. It will spend and be spent, and

gather strength from toil, being fervent in spirit serving the Lord, and counting it meat and drink to do his will.

#### YOUTH IS ALSO BOLD AND ENERGETIC.

Youth also is dauntless, bold as a lion, not fearing the face of man, ready to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in him, and to contend earnestly for the faith,—if needs be, even unto blood. Only let this courage be tempered with discretion, so that you may be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, becoming all things to all men, hoping all things and bearing all things, if by any means you may save some,—catching them with a heavenly guile, drawing them by the cords of a man or plucking them as brands from the burning. “Seeing therefore ye have this ministry, ye faint not.”

Thus, nor the hills and vales that breathe of heaven,  
And vines, and setting suns, and rays of even,  
Alone speak God's blest language; but the walls  
Of crowded cities echo back his calls,  
Heard sweetly amid rude suburban cells,  
And thickly-peopled towns, where Penury dwells,  
There, haply, some fond parent's aching breast  
Looks for a long-lost child in sad unrest,  
Watching the distance in his lone abode,  
Where opes the window to the mountain road.  
Oh, haste to meet the wanderer on the wild,  
Till Justice yields to Mercy reconciled.  
With yearning heart oh breathe celestial love,  
Melting with mercy such as dwell above,  
That, while sad Memory racks with guilty fears,  
Thy heart-appealing love may move his tears,  
And urge to rise and seek that Father's face  
Who hastes to grasp him in his fond embrace.

#### WHAT YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ALREADY DONE.

Already these associations have done much, and have devised many unpractised, if not unthought-of, ways and walks of usefulness. They are now found in the lanes and streets and thoroughfares of our cities, gathering the outcast ragged children into schools, visiting the sick and the dying, the fatherless and the widow, and, by tracts and books and lectures, carrying the gospel to every house and hovel and garret and chamber. “Like a sunbeam passing undefiled through the foulest atmosphere,” they are seen labouring in Christian purity and love where the basest of the race are perishing, not shrinking from their loathsome guilt, but, with Jesus' pity and Jesus' tears, offering to the very chief of sinners the cup of salvation, the bread of life, the manna of heaven, the living water, and the healing balm.

Under their auspices we find out-door preaching in the streets or parks or commons of some of our large cities.\* They have

\*PREACHING ON BOSTON COMMON.—Yesterday afternoon, says the “Traveler” of Mouday, the 21st instant, at six o'clock, Rev. Dr. Kirk, of this city,

given rise also to many valuable series of public lectures to young men. And by their annual conferences they are now converging into one centre the light and heat, the enterprise and experience, of all affiliated societies, and giving the best opportunity for awakening and diffusing the spirit of ever-widening charity.

This may, and we trust will, lead to the publication of a weekly paper or monthly magazine, specially devoted to the wants of young men, and opening up a channel by which sanctified talent and holy zeal may communicate the inspirations of their heaven-taught souls to their brethren, and provoke them to still greater love and zeal and devotion.†

On a recent journey to the mountains of Virginia, I heard everywhere, as I passed along, complaints of long-continued and destructive drought; and parched fields, clouds of dust, and thin-eared, withering crops, gave melancholy proof of the sad truth. But scarcely had I reached the mountains before the clouds began to gather from all quarters and to accumulate their combined vapours in one general mass, so thick and heavy as to darken the mid-day sun and encompass our very dwellings like the curtains of night. The winds soon rallied their forces. The lightnings commenced their brilliant and glorious display of terrific power and grandeur. And, as the artillery of heaven, like salvos of cannon in honor of some great victory, announced the approach of Him who thundereth marvellously with his voice and directeth his lightning unto the ends of the earth, the heavens poured down, far and wide, a copious and fertilizing rain.

And just such for years had been the condition and complaint of the Christian world. Fields dry and barren, and "high unto cursing," lay everywhere, in waste sterility, be-

preached to an audience of about three thousand people, in Yale's mammoth tent, which was spread for the purpose on the Common, near the pond. The services were the same as those usually practised in our churches; and the discourse which the reverend preacher delivered, from the text furnished in the parable of the Prodigal Son, was well conceived for such an audience, and was most attentively and respectfully hearkened to. Outdoor preaching having thus proved a success, we learn that the Young Men's Christian Association, under whose auspices this was conceived, will have further services conducted on next Sunday afternoon, at which the Right Rev. Bishop Eastburn will officiate.

The "Christian Witness and Church Advocate" (Episcopal) says of this movement: "We are glad to learn that a successful commencement of outdoor preaching was made in this city last Sunday under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association. Rev. Mr. Kirk preached, at six o'clock in the afternoon, to an audience of about three thousand people, in Yale's mammoth tent, which was spread for the purpose on the Common, near the pond. On next Sunday afternoon we are informed that there will be services at the same hour. We do not know who will officiate. This is a good movement; and we hope it will bring multitudes to hear the gospel who are now living as if its glad tidings had never sounded upon our earth."

†This, we find, is already initiated in the Quarterly Reporter, under the direction of the Central Committee, at Cincinnati, Ohio.

neath a heaven impenetrable as brass, and fast becoming hard as iron. Faithful and believing hearts everywhere bewailed in secret places the gloomy and insensible condition of the church, and earnestly besought the Lord of the harvest to send forth the wind of his Spirit, and the dew and rain of his life-giving presence. Soon a small cloud was seen in the western horizon. Other clouds were attracted by it, and united with it, until they spread themselves over the eastern horizon also. To drop the figure, Christian young men in the heart of London were awakened to the claim of perishing young men around them, and, unnoticed and unknown, united themselves for prayer and mutual encouragement. Others were attracted and interested in their movement. Associations multiplied in England, Scotland, on the Continent, and in the United States. Union in prayer and labour, in self-denial and self-sacrifice, for the salvation of souls, was followed by its promised blessing from above. God heard and answered. God looked down well pleased, and was with them to bless and do them good. His ear was opened. His hand was outstretched. The windows of heaven were unbarred. Showers of divine grace were poured down in copious measure on many a barren field,—here a little and there a little. The voice of joy and gladness was heard in every land. Praise and thanksgiving arose from many a new-born soul, from rejoicing friends, and from sympathizing angels. The hearts of young men buried in the pursuits of earth were again turned to their Saviour and his cause, and were led to ask, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Our theological seminaries began to multiply their diminished numbers, and, as the fields after the genial rain put on their green and flourishing attire, and gave promise of an abundant harvest, so also has God given the cheering prospect of labourers more adequate to his spiritual harvest.

And if such has been the beginning of this good work and such the first-fruits of these associations, what may we expect in their maturity, through the mercy of that gracious Redeemer to whom the hearts of the young are so dear, and who has chosen by their instrumentality to perfect praise, and to do many and even greater works than eye hath yet seen, or ear heard, or have entered into the heart of man to conceive?

#### WHAT THESE ASSOCIATIONS MAY YET ACCOMPLISH.

The field is large, the door is open. There is yet room—oh, how much room!—for all that have a heart and a hand to work in the vineyard. The harvest is white, yea, perishing for lack of labourers, and of labourers beyond and supplementary to those who "are burdened" and broken down with the exhausting, overwhelming duties of the ministry. The canvassing of



our cities for children to fill mission schools in their convenient neighborhood and adapted to their social position,\*—the distribution of Bibles, tracts, and books,—the establishment of local prayer and fellowship meetings and lectures,—co-operation with benevolent and charitable institutions for the relief of want and suffering,—the establishment of saving-banks for the poor, or such direction and advice concerning them as is necessary to make them available,—these, and whatever else will tend to elevate, reform, and render temperate, thrifty, prudent, and economical, the humbler classes of society, are “opportunities of doing good to all,” which are not to be overlooked when it is in the power of their hand to use them:—

Free-handed bounty! where her footsteps stray,  
Spring verdant trees around, and flowers that move  
Their thankful heads. Her treasure is above;  
And therefore doth she shrink from earthly praise,—  
Friend of the poor!

#### THE NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN IN THE UNITED STATES.

There cannot be less than one million of young men among the four million of professors in the thirty thousand evangelical churches of the United States, and not less than four million young men among the families connected with and under the influence of the sixteen million persons who are affiliated with those churches. What a host of workmen! What a field in which to work! What work may not such materials, wrought upon by such artificers, under the direction and wisdom and all-powerful grace of the Master-Workman—the divine Sculptor and the all-powerful Regenerator—accomplish! What new life may they not infuse into these churches! How may the sound of their voice, saying “come,” swell the voice of the preached gospel, saying “come,” until throughout all the earth there shall be no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,—none left to say unto his brother, “Know thou the Lord, because all shall know him from the least unto the greatest!” What a noble testimony may not such a host, marshalled under the banner of the Crucified, bear to the glorious

\*SUNDAY-SCHOOL CANVASS OF LONDON.—The Sunday-school canvass of the metropolis has commenced with every prospect of a successful result. Mr. Hartley, the Secretary of the Canvass Committee, says, “As far as can be ascertained the number of canvassers engaged in this important work is not less than eight or ten thousand. About one thousand copies of the ‘Appeal to the Christians of London,’ four hundred thousand copies of the ‘Address to Parents,’ seven thousand canvassers’ books, and the same number of recommendation-books, have been prepared and put in circulation, and numerous meetings have been held to instruct and interest the canvassers in the several districts of the metropolis.” Such an army of Christian laborers, simultaneously perambulating the streets of London, penetrating every court and alley, visiting every house, and seeking to bring under religious instruction the entire youthful population, is probably an event unprecedented in the history of the Church, and richly deserves the hearty sympathy and earnest prayers of every Christian patriot and philanthropist.

gospel of the blessed God! What an invincible protest may they not offer against atheism, scepticism, false philosophy, and error of every name and school; against bigotry, sectarianism, and every high thing that exalteth itself in opposition to the truth and power and love and glory of God, and to that peace and good will which should prevail among men! What a shout may go up from such a multitude,—loud as the noise of many waters, or of a victorious army when with acclamations of triumph it drives before it the retreating foe like chaff before the whirlwind, or as the sound of blest voices uttering joy which ascend to the throne of God and the Lamb from that innumerable company, whom no man can number, around the throne,—as they “lift up their voice with strength, as they lift it up, and are not afraid, and say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.”

#### THE GLORIOUS CONFEDERATION OF ALL CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.

What a magnificent embodiment of Christian love would the association of these millions of young men present, drawn together and united and held together by “Him to whom shall be the gathering of the nations.”\* Having Christ in their heart the hope of glory, they find in Christ’s church a home where “the social instincts of humanity, attracted by brotherly love, experience all that gratifies, gladdens, and purifies.” And in the divine principle of association they have “a bond of perfectness;” a law of attraction; an atmosphere of light; an element of active, out-going, diffusive, and all-embracing charity, by which the divided are made one and the sin-separated united by holy principles; an instinct stronger than any earth-born affection penetrating through all social, civil, political, and ecclesiastical distinctions, and drawing together into one heart-yearning, heart-satisfying affection the children of God, the partakers of one blood, brethren in Christ and heirs together through him to the same inheritance of glory.

This feeling of brotherhood, binding Christians together here as children not only of the same Father but also of the same mother, (for Jerusalem, or Zion, is the mother of us all,) would be a bond elastic enough and strong enough to encircle our land and the globe itself, and to unite together in one bundle of life—irresistible by its united strength as an aggressive weapon and secure against all assaults in its self-protecting combination—all who call upon the name of the Lord. both theirs and ours.

And it will yet do so. God will gather his children from the

\*May not the power of these associations be vastly enhanced by associating with them Christian young women in affiliated union, and by co-operating with and superintending Young Women’s Christian Associations for doing for young women what these do for young men?

east, and gather them from the west. He will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back. Bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and shall surname himself by the name of Israel. How blissful the contemplation of that general assembly, that covenanted union of the children of God! Born by a new celestial birth, Jesus himself presiding over and blessing them; the representatives of all sects and parties shall meet to sing the jubilee of universal peace and celebrate the funeral of all their differences! Over that grave no tears shall be shed. Beside it no pale mourners shall stand. All quarrels and controversies and all weapons of war shall then be forever buried, —buried without hope or fear of a resurrection, while above, shining brightly and gloriously, heaven shall rise as the temple dedicated to eternal concord.

Glorious prophecy! Hasten it in our time, O Lord. Why tarry thy chariot-wheels? Tarry not. Defer not. Hearken and bless. Speak thou the word, and great shall be the multitude. Remember thy covenant which thou hast made, which thou hast spoken, which thou hast renewed and sealed by two immutable things,—thy promise and thy oath. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And let it come to pass in these days that thou wilt pour out thy Spirit upon all flesh. Then shall our sons and our daughters prophesy, and our young men see visions, and our old men dream dreams; and then shall it come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Even so, Lord Jesus; come quickly. For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. O ye watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, hold not your peace day nor night. Make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee, O Zion; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

#### CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN THE BOND OF NATIONAL UNION.

Before concluding, let me remark that there never was a time in this country when it was so important that Christians of all denominations should see eye to eye and be of one heart and one mind. The union of these States is the greatest miracle of God's political wisdom, power, and goodness, ever performed since the exodus of Israel and the establishment of the

divine theocratic republic. Not the ark upon the whelming waters of a deluged world, with its living freight and its divine principles, was more important to the interests of humanity, or more significant of divine benignity, than is this ark bearing within its consecrated walls the life and power of a world whelmed in the flood of civil and religious despotism. And yet there are machinations of evil working with superhuman energy to undermine the foundations of that union, and to overturn and overturn, until all our hallowed institutions, civil, political, and religious,—the praise and envy of the whole earth,—are buried in one mass of ruins! And yet against that very ark Satan has let loose all the winds of heaven, and upheaved the ocean from its inmost depths to bury it in its fathomless abyss, and once more defeat, if he may, the merciful purposes of God towards man!

But the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Its builder and maker is God. The Lord in the midst of it is mighty. It is founded upon the Rock of ages. That ark is of divine construction, and was launched upon her billowy deep by the divine power. And he who guides her course can make even the winds to be still and the waves to cease, can encircle her with the boy of promise, make her framework durable as the everlasting mountains, and again send forth from her, to a world groaning under the corruption and abuses of superstition and despotic tyranny, the dove of loving peace, the olive-branch of hope, the pledges of liberty and of a renovated earth.

Thou too sail on, O ship of State,  
Sail on, O Union strong and great!  
*Humanity*—with all its fears,  
With all the hopes of future years—  
*Is hanging breathless on thy fate!*  
*We know what master laid thy keel;*  
What workman wrought thy ribs of steel;  
Who made each mast and sail and rope;  
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!  
Fear not each sudden sound and shock:  
*'Tis of the wave, and not the rock;*  
*'Tis but the flapping of the sail,*  
And not a rent made by the gale!  
In spite of rock and tempest-roar,  
*In spite of false lights on the shore,*  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
*Our faith, triumphant o'er our fears,*  
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

For the realization, however, of this glorious prophecy, to what other agency can we look with greater confidence than to the union of our Christian young men throughout the land? These can "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." By these DISUNION can be averted and the UNION preserved. These can do more by their Christian fellowship and prayers



and influence, than all the politicians in the land can do either for good or ill. "They have power with God to prevail."

And as at their recent conference these associations were invoked to employ this influence for the deliverance of our country and Britain our fatherland from war, so would I now invoke it for averting the still more dreadful calamity of civil war and political disunion.

I allude to this subject not as a politician,—for I have never been identified with any one political party,—but as a Christian citizen who has been led to cherish these sentiments towards the land of his early adoption and matured affection,—and I do it because the most frightful peculiarity in the present conflict of opinion is the abandonment of the Bible as a standard of duty and of morals even by many professing Christians. their association with those who reject its authority altogether, and the consequent promulgation of principles which, once established, could lead only to agrarianism, anarchy, and bloodshed.

To you, my young friends, I would therefore address the truly eloquent, Christian, and patriotic words of the venerable Dr. Nott,—the American Nestor,—and thus blend the voice of the North with that of the South, in an appeal to your heart of hearts on behalf of our bleeding, lacerated country.\*

'You enter,' says that venerable and patriotic Christian, 'upon life at a critical conjuncture. Your country stands in need of all the talents and all the influence you can carry with you to her assistance. May I not hope that, as you are numbered among her patriots and statesmen, your prudence will be as exemplary as your zeal? Though you should differ in political opinions, be one in affection, one in the pursuit of glory, and one in the love of your country. Do nothing, say nothing, to produce unnecessary rigour on the one part or lawless resistance on the other. Beware how you contribute to awaken the whirlwind of passion, or to invite to this sacred land the reign of anarchy.

'Whatever irritations may be felt, whatever questions may be agitated, and however you yourselves may be divided, be it your part to calm, to soothe, to allay, to check the deed of violence, to charm down the spirit of party, to strengthen the bonds of social intercourse, and to prove by your own amiable deportment, by your own affectionate intercourse, that it is possible for brethren to differ and be BRETHREN STILL. Differ indeed you may, and avow that difference. Freedom of speech is your birthright. The deed which conveys it was written in the blood of your fathers; it was sealed beside their sepulchres; and let no man take it from you. But remember that the deed which conveys defines also, and limits, this freedom. And re-

\*Given in a Baccalaureate address to the students of Union College.

member, too, that the line which divides between liberty and licentiousness is *but a line*, and that it is easily transgressed. The assassin's dagger is not more fatal to the peace of the community than the liar's tongue and the maligner's fang. Nor does the sacred charter of the freeman's privileges furnish to the one, any more than to the other, an asylum.

'It is your happiness to live under a government of laws. Nor, were it demonstrated that these were impolitic, or even oppressive, would it justify resistance. There is a redeeming principle in the Constitution itself. That instrument provides a legitimate remedy for grievances, and, unless on great emergencies, the only rightful one. Under a compact like ours, the majority must govern: the minority must submit, and they ought to submit. Not by constraint merely, but for conscience' sake. *The powers that be are ordained of God*; and, while they execute the purpose for which they were ordained, *to resist them is to resist the ordinance of God*.

'You remember that Jesus Christ paid tribute even unto Cæsar, than whom there has not lived a more execrable tyrant. You remember, too, that his immediate followers, as became the disciples of such a master, everywhere bowed to the supremacy of the Roman laws. It is a fact that will ever redound to the honour of the Christian church and of its divine Founder, that its members, though everywhere oppressed and persecuted for three successive centuries, were nowhere implicated in those commotions which agitated the provinces, nor were they ever accessory to those treasons which, during that period, so often stained the capital with blood.

'In the worst of times, therefore, and however you may differ with respect to men and measures, still cling to the Constitution; CLING TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNION; cling to the institutions of your country. These, under God, are your political ARK of safety; the ark that contains the cradle of liberty in which you were rocked, that preserves the vase of Christianity in which you were baptized, and that defends the sacred urn where the ashes of your patriot fathers moulder. Cling, therefore, to this ark, and defend it while a drop of blood is propelled from your heart or a shred of muscle quivers on your bones. Triumph as the friends of liberty, of order, of religion, or fall as martyrs.'

A thrill of anxious foreboding runs through every bosom in this broad land. The national life is awake. It throbs with powerful emotion. It is alarmed for its own safety. False and treacherous physicians wait around, but only that by their baneful drugs they may hasten a catastrophe; while hungry heirs, from whom our country has long withheld the full measure both of the pre-eminence and profit they desire, are ready

to rejoice over her as fallen,—sunk behind the dark clouds of desolation while her sun was yet shining more and more towards her promised day of glorious, unrivalled splendour.

Haste, then, to her relief. The United States of America expects that every man will do his duty. Only secure to her free air, prevent these poisonous dosings, and let her alone, and, with God's blessing sought and obtained by prayer, there is vitality enough to outgrow all her distempers and to live to an enduring age amid the joyful acclamations of her own numerous posterity. May she thus live *THE MOTHER OF US ALL!*

May she thus abide with us, "not merely as a vast instrumentality for the protection of our commerce and navigation, and for achieving power and eminence among the sovereigns of the earth, but as a means of improving the material lot, of elevating the moral and mental nature, and of insuring the personal happiness, of the millions of many distant generations."

Or, to change our figure: the ship of the state is in the midst of breakers on a dangerous coast. She has deranged her compass, and has unshipped her rudder. She has no certain reckoning to guide her, for the sun has not been visible at its zenith for many days, and her brave and noble pilots one after another have been washed overboard at their dangerous post. What are we to do? Lower the boat, and let every man that can escape with his plunder do so? Not at all. We are as Paul was. We must do as Paul did. Every man must remain at his post of duty. Not a soul must give up the ship or give up hope. Only abide with her. Only rectify the compass and replace the rudder. Only cast overboard every weight, every false reliance, every carnal policy, every self-seeking, selfish, and merely-sectional cargo; and only let those who represent Paul plead, as Paul did, with Paul's divine Master, and not a soul on board shall perish. He, the Lord of all, omnipotent to save, will come to our relief. He will command the winds and the waves, and they must obey him. They shall be at peace. The storm-clouds shall roll away before the favouring breeze. The sun shall again shine forth and the stars appear in their brightness. We shall all come safe to land. Not one shall perish; and there, safely moored, all perils over, we shall all together swell one prayer of praise and one song of thanksgiving to Him that hath done such great things for us. United in Christ, the Union is safe.\*

\*"When my eyes," said Webster, "shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in the heavens, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonoured fragments of a once glorious Union,—on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent,—on a land rent with feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood. Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honoured throughout the earth, still full-high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre,—not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured,—

While the language free and bold  
 Which the bard of Avon sung,—  
 In which our Milton told  
 How the vaults of heaven rung,  
 When Satan, blasted, fell with all his host.  
 While these, with reverence meet,  
 Ten thousand echoes greet,  
 And from rock to rock repeat  
     Round our coast!!  
 While the manners, while the arts,  
 That mould a nation's soul,  
 Still cling around our hearts,  
 Between let rivers roll,  
 Our joint communion breaking with the sun;  
 Yet still from either side  
 The bands of love stretched wide,  
 With voice of blood shall reach,  
 More audible than speech,  
 And loud proclaim to all that we are one.

#### THE COMMUNION OF CITIZENSHIP AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Let us then,—for I am one of your fraternity,—let us cherish the communion of citizenship, and, above all, the communion

bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as, 'What is all this worth?'—nor those other words of disunion and folly, 'Liberty first, and Union afterward;' but everywhere—spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land and in every wind under the whole heavens—that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart: 'Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.'"

"I have been abroad," says President Buchanan, "in other lands; I have witnessed arbitrary power; I have contemplated the people of other countries: but there is no county under God's heavens where a man feels for his fellow-man, except in the United States. And if you could feel how despotism looks on, how jealous despotic powers of the world are of our glorious institutions, you would cherish the Constitution and Union in your hearts,—next to your belief in the Christian religion:—the Bible for heaven, and the Constitution of your country for earth."

That is a beautiful figure of Winthrop's, in reference to our Constitution, where he says, "Like one of those wondrous rocking-stones raised by the Druids, which the finger of a child might vibrate to the centre yet the might of an army could not move from its place, our Constitution is so nicely poised that it seems to sway with the very breath of passion, yet so firmly based in the hearts and affections of the people, that the wildest storms of treason and fanaticism break over it in vain." We trust that this may be verified.

#### "OUR NATIVE LAND.

"Home of our birth! our dear-loved land,  
 Thy glories stretch from sea to sea:  
 From ocean-lake to tropic strand;  
 Land of the fearless and the free!  
 "From where the western Golden Gate  
 Gleams ruddy in the sunset ray,  
 To where the stern Atlantic chain  
 Looks proudly on the rising day,—  
 "From far Niagara's deluge wild  
 To Florida's perennial flowers:  
 Ne'er hath the sun of heaven smiled  
 On such a heritage as ours.  
 "God and the Union! This our creed,—  
 Our motto this forever be:  
 So shall our starry banner float  
 Forever o'er the brave and free!"



of saints, the brotherhood of Christianity. The motto of our national union is the motto also of our Christian union:—*E PLURIBUS UNUM*,—one from many,—many united into one,—every one having his own peculiar and independent institutions, rights, interests, and policy, all having a common constitution, common dangers, and common glory or shame, prosperity or progress. And thus also, while there is one Lord and one Spirit, there are various gifts and diversities of administration in every church and in every individual Christian. The working of the Spirit in the one universal church, made up of all its separate members, is like “the breathing of the wind upon the ocean, no two waves shaping themselves to exact uniformity, and yet all curving and rippling into expressions of one great law, all answering to each other in perfect harmony as developments of one great principle. Every Christian has his own differentia, his own peculiar catalogue of hopes and aspirations and impulses; and yet he has also so much in common with all his brethren in Christ as to be able to make their language his own.” Hence arise, like a forest of beautiful peaks soaring heavenward from a single mountain, the innumerable blessings not only of the communion of saints, but, above all, of holy fellowship, holy co-operation and striving together for the furtherance of the gospel.

Let us then, as fellow-workmen and fellow-pilgrims, walk hand in hand, bearing one another's burdens, helping each other's infirmities, forbearing one another in love, seeking the things that make for peace, each minding his own business and fulfilling his own task, and all looking for and hasting unto the coming of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Come, brothers! let us onward;  
 Night comes without delay,  
 And in this howling desert  
 It is not good to stay.  
 Take courage and be strong;  
 We are hasting on to heaven;  
 Strength for warfare will be given,  
 And glory won ere long.

The pilgrims' path of trial  
 We do not fear to view;  
 We know his voice who calls us,—  
 We know him to be true.  
 Then let who will condemn,  
 Come strong in his Almighty grace,  
 Come, every one with steadfast face!  
 On to Jerusalem!

O brothers, soon is ended  
 The journey we've begun;  
 Endure a little longer,—  
 The race will soon be run.  
 And in the land of rest—  
 In yonder bright eternal home  
 Where all the Father's loved ones come—  
 We shall be safe and blest.

Then, boldly let us venture!  
 This, this is worth the cost:  
 Though dangers we encounter,  
 Though every thing is lost,  
 O world! how vain thy call!  
 We follow him who went before,  
 We follow, to th' eternal shore,  
 Jesus, our all-in-all.

## THE APPEAL.

God, my brothers, will not leave us;  
 Still his heaven is o'er us bent;  
 His commandments are not grievous;  
 Do his will, and be content.  
 Only truth and love shall flourish  
 In the end, beloved mates;  
 Only charity can nourish  
 Those whom charity creates.  
 Believe in God.

You have wrongs by forge and furnace,  
 You have darkness, you have dread;  
 But you work in radiant harness,  
 And your God is overhead.  
 Does not night bring forth the morning?  
 Does not darkness father light?  
 Even now we have forewarning,  
 Brothers, of the close of night.  
 Believe in God.

Many, many are the shadows  
 That the dawn of truth reveals  
 Beautiful on life's broad meadows  
 Is the light the Christian feels.  
 Evil shall give place to goodness,  
 Wrong be dispossess'd by right;  
 Out of old chaotic rudeness  
 God evokes a world of light.  
 Believe in God.

Do ye toil? Oh, freer, firmer  
 Ye shall grow beneath your toil;  
 Only craven spirits murmur,  
 Lightly rooted in the soil.  
 Through the gloom, and through the darkness,  
 Through the danger and the dole,  
 Through the mist and through the murkness,  
 Travels the great human soul.  
 Believe in God.

I through doubt and darkness travel  
 Through the agony and gloom,  
 Hoping that I shall unravel  
 This strange web beyond the tomb.  
 O my brothers! men heroic!  
 Workers both with hand and brain!  
 'Tis the Christian—not the Stoic—  
 That best triumphs over pain.  
 Believe in God.

O my brothers! love and labour!  
Conquer wrong by doing right;  
Truth alone must be your sabre,  
Love alone your shield in fight.  
Virtue yet shall cancel vices;  
Look above, beloved mates!  
Only God himself suffices  
Those whom God alone creates.  
Believe in God.

## APPENDIX.

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### I.

#### SKETCHES OF YOUNG MEN.

ALEXANDER OF MACEDON extended his power over Greece, conquered Egypt, rebuilt Alexandria, overran all Asia, and died at thirty-eight years of age.

Hannibal was but twenty-five when, after the fall of his father Hamilcar, and Asdrubal his successor, he was chosen commander-in-chief of the Carthaginian army. At twenty-seven he captured Saguntum from the Romans. Before he was thirty-four, he carried his arms from Africa into Italy, conquered Publius Scipio on the banks of the Ticinus, routed Sempronius near the Trebia, defeated Flaminius on his approach to the Apennines, laid waste the whole country, defeated Fabius Maximus and Varro, marched into Capua, and at the age of thirty-five was thundering at the gates of Rome.

Scipio Africanus was scarcely sixteen when he took an active part in the battle of Cannæ and saved the life of his father. The wreck of the Roman cavalry chose him then for their leader, and he conducted them back to the capital. After he was twenty, he was appointed proconsul of Spain, where he took New Carthage by storm. Soon after he defeated successively Asdrubal, (Hannibal's brother,) Mago, and Hann, crossed over into Africa, negotiating with Syphax, the Massasylian king, returned to Spain, quelled the insurrection there, drove the Carthaginians wholly from the peninsula, returned to Rome, devised the diversion against the Carthaginians by carrying the war into Africa, crossed thither, destroyed the army of Syphax, compelled the return of Hannibal, and defeated Asdrubal a second time.

Charlemagne was crowned King of the Franks before he was twenty-six. At the age of twenty-eight, he had conquered Aquitania; at the age of thirty, he made himself master of the whole German and French Empires.

Charles XII., of Sweden, was declared of age by the States, and succeeded his father, at the age of fifteen. At eighteen, he headed the expedition against the Danes, whom he checked; and, with a fourth of their numbers, he cut to pieces the Russian army, commanded by the Czar Peter, at Narva, crossed the Dwina, gained a victory over the Saxons, and carried his arms into Poland. At twenty-one, he had conquered Poland and dictated to them a new sovereign. At twenty-four he had



subdued Saxony, and at twenty-seven he was conducting his victorious troops into the heart of Russia, when a severe wound prevented his taking command in person, and resulted in his overthrow and subsequent treacherous captivity in Turkey.

Lafayette was major-general in the American army at the age of eighteen; was but twenty when he was wounded at the battle of Brandywine; but twenty-two when he raised supplies for his army, on his own credit, at Baltimore; and but twenty-three when raised to the office of commander-in-chief of the National Guards of France.

Napoleon Bonaparte commenced his military career as an officer of artillery at the siege of Toulon. His splendid campaign in Italy was performed at the age of twenty-seven. During the next year, when he was about twenty-eight, he gained battle after battle over the Austrians in Italy, conquered Mantua, carried the war into Austria, ravaged the Tyrol, concluded an advantageous peace, took possession of Milan and the Venetian Republic, revolutionized Genoa, and formed the Cisalpine Republic. At the age of twenty-nine, he received the command of the army against Egypt, scattered the clouds of Mameluke cavalry, mastered Alexandria, Aboukir, and Cairo, and wrested the land of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies from the proud descendants of the prophet. At the age of thirty he fell among the Parisians like a thunderbolt, overthrew the directorial government, dispersed the Council of Five Hundred, and was proclaimed first consul. At the age of thirty-one he crossed the Alps with an army, and destroyed the Austrians by a blow at Marengo. At the age of thirty-two he established the Code of Napoleon; in the same year he was elected consul for life by the people, and at the age of thirty-three he was declared Emperor of the French nation.

William Pitt, the first Earl of Chatham, was but twenty-seven years of age when, as a member of Parliament, he waged the war of a giant against the corruptions of Sir Robert Walpole.

The younger Pitt was scarcely twenty years of age when, with masterly power, he grappled with the veterans in Parliament in favour of America. At twenty-two he was called to the high and responsible trust of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was his age when he came forth in his might on the affairs of the East Indies. At twenty-nine, during the first insanity of George III., he rallied around the Prince of Wales.

Edmund Burke, at the age of nineteen, planned a refutation of the metaphysical theories of Berkeley and Hume. At twenty he was in the Temple, the admiration of its inmates for the brilliancy of his genius and the variety of his acquisitions. At twenty-six he published his celebrated satire entitled "A Vin-

dication of Natural Society." The same year he published his "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful,"—so much admired for its spirit of philosophical investigation and the elegance of its language. At twenty-five he was First Lord of the Treasury.

George Washington was only twenty-seven years of age when he covered the retreat of the British troops at Braddock's defeat, and the same year was appointed commander-in-chief of all the Virginia forces.

General Joseph Warren was only twenty-nine years of age when, in defiance of the British soldiers stationed at the door of the church, he pronounced the celebrated oration which aroused the spirit of liberty and patriotism that terminated in the achievement of independence. At thirty-four he gloriously fell, gallantly fighting for the cause of freedom, on Bunker Hill.

Alexander Hamilton was a lieutenant-colonel in the army of the American Revolution and aide-de-camp to Washington at the age of twenty. At the age of twenty-five he was a member of Congress from New York; at thirty he was one of the ablest members of the Convention that formed the Constitution of the United States. At thirty-one he was a member of the New York Convention, and joint author of the great work entitled the "Federalist." At thirty-two he was Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, and arranged the financial branch of the government upon so perfect a plan that no great improvement has ever been made upon it by his successors.

Thomas Haywood, of North Carolina, was but thirty years of age when he signed the glorious record of a nation's birth,—the Declaration of Independence. Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts, Benjamin Rush and James Wilson, of Pennsylvania, were but thirty-one years of age; Matthew Thornton, of New Hampshire, thirty-one; Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, Arthur Middleton, of South Carolina, and Thomas Stone, of Maryland, thirty-three; and William Hooper, of North Carolina, thirty-four.

John Jay, at twenty-nine years of age, was a member of the Revolutionary Congress, and, being associated with Lee and Livingston on the committee for drafting an address to the people of Great Britain, drew up that paper himself, which was considered one of the most eloquent productions of the time. At thirty-two he penned the Constitution of New York, and in the same year was appointed chief-justice of the State. At thirty-four he was appointed minister to Spain.

At the age of twenty-six, Thomas Jefferson was a leading member of the Colonial Legislature of Virginia. At thirty he was a member of the Virginia Convention; at thirty-two a

member of Congress; at thirty-three he drafted the Declaration of Independence.

Milton, at the age of twenty-three, had written his finest miscellaneous poems, including his "L'Allegro," "Penseroso," "Comus," and the most beautiful of his monodies.

Lord Byron, at the age of twenty, published his celebrated satire upon the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers;" at twenty-three, the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." Indeed, all the poetic treasures of his genius were poured forth in their richest profusion before he was thirty-four years old; and he died at thirty-seven.

Mozart, the great German musician, completed all his noblest compositions before he was thirty-four years old; and he died at thirty-six.

Pope wrote his published poems by the time he was nineteen years old; at twenty his "Essay on Criticism;" at twenty-one the "Rape of the Lock;" and at twenty-five his great work,—the translation of the Iliad.

Dr. Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan" was commenced at the age of sixteen and finished at twenty-two. At the latter age he composed his celebrated Dissertation on the history, eloquence, and poetry of the Bible, which was immediately published, and republished in Europe.

This list might be indefinitely multiplied by a reference to poets, reformers, divines, and missionaries, most of whom began early to develop and work out their mission for humanity, and, having done so, passed to their rest and recompense.

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## II.

We append the following article, which has just appeared in the Richmond Central Presbyterian, both as a very just delineation of these Associations and as presenting in the one at Richmond a good model to others:

### THE PLACE FOR YOUNG MEN.

One of the noblest Institutions in this city is the Young Men's Christian Association. The pious ingenuity of the good has never devised an organization better fitted to accomplish two great and important ends, viz.: the social, intellectual, and moral improvement of its own members, and the temporal and spiritual welfare of those not connected with it, yet in whose behalf this organization exerts its influence.

There is such variety in its plans and in its means of usefulness that it is practically the ally of nearly every good enterprise known to society and to the church.

There is so much symmetry in its constitution, and such is the practical working of its different departments of labour, that it is capable of becoming the auxiliary to more objects of philanthropy and religion than any other society of which we have any knowledge. It has its committees for seeking out and relieving the destitute, for visiting the inmates of poor-houses and hospitals, for making the acquaintance of young men on their first arrival in the city, for the purpose of aiding them in finding employment and for the purpose of surrounding them with moral and religious influences; it furnishes teachers to Sabbath schools, it conducts strangers to the house of God; in a word, responsive to every call of benevolence and Christian zeal, this Society comes forward in all the alacrity and ardour of its youthful vigor, with the offer of its warm heart and strong arm, feeling honoured in having its services accepted, and delighting to render its efficient aid. Such are its relations to society at large; such its external work.

As to its inner life, we feel assured that, had the Young Men's Christian Association no other object than the improvement of its own members, this alone would render it worthy of the sympathy and support of every youth of generous feelings and honourable principles; for such is the nature of its organization that it calls into play and develops the finest social qualities of our nature; it throws young men together in such a way as to excite the kindest interest in each other, to soften and break down prejudices, and to awaken sentiments of mutual esteem and friendship.

Unlike other associations among young men which sometimes lead to rivalries and discord,—to the encouragement of coarse and vulgar manners, to the indulgence of a taste for low and degrading pleasures, and to the formation perhaps of dissipated habits,—the intercourse which results from *this* association is all elevating, pure, and refining. It tends to repress whatever is rude, selfish, and sensual, and to give development to all that is disinterested, generous, and manly; for around all of its meetings, even those which are merely literary and most unreservedly social, there is thrown the gentle and sweetly-constraining influence of our common Christianity; and in all the genial flow of youthful spirits, in all the collision of mind with mind, while there is every thing in the ardour and spirit and glow of the intercourse to make it plain that it is a *young men's* association, still, it is never forgotten that it is a young men's *Christian* association.

For the entertainment and profit of its members it has established a library and reading-room; it has its meetings for friendly intercourse, its rhetorical society for literary exercises and forensic discussions, its meetings for business and its meet-



ings for prayer; and, in addition to these means of mental and spiritual improvement, it has formed another circle for the study of the Holy Scriptures. On every Thursday night the Hall of the Association is thrown open to all who are willing to attend informal lectures and examinations on portions of Scripture selected for the occasion. This class is under the direction of one of the pastors of the city; and any young man who desires to become a member of it is at liberty to do so, whether he is a member of any church or not, and whether he is a member of the Association or not.

THE END.

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